

PUNK PLANET

ISSUE 24

\$2



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THE ART &
DESIGN
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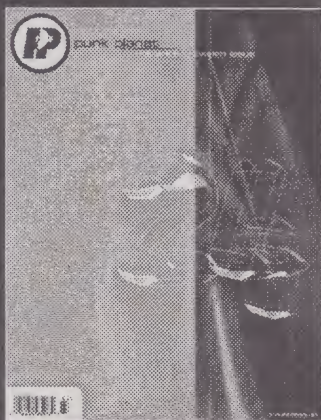
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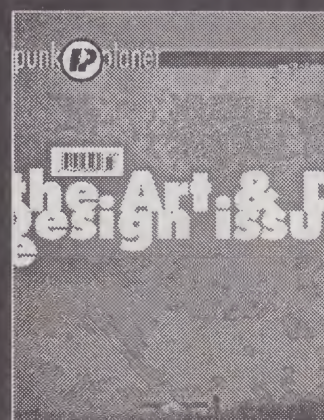
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Planeteers

Daniel Sinker
the hard rhymers

Josh Hooten
the juice

Joel Schalit
minister of information

Eric Action
the track attacker

Antonia Simigis
supreme master of defense

Jessica Hopper
media assassin

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look & feel

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additional look & feel

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reviews

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ads, submissions & letters

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the risks

TRACK ONE/INTRO

"Say what you want 'cause this is a new art school" —the Jam

From the point that the Sex Pistols took to the stage at St. Albans, Hertfordshire College of Art and Design for their first show, art and punk were forever linked. In the years that followed, however, the music would become the focus of punk. In fact, the focus became so sharp that 20 years later, eyebrows would be raised when I would tell people the topic of this issue.

"Art and design? What does that have to do with punk?"

Maybe you're asking that very same question right now. Don't feel bad if you are, it's totally understandable. Hopefully by the end of this issue, you'll have a quite few answers to that question. You'll also probably have a lot more questions to ask. I know I do.

When we initially decided to do an art & design issue Josh Hooten and myself sat down and made a list of all the people we wanted to talk to. It was a list about 5 times longer than the number of people we did get to talk to, write about, or have write something for the issue.

What that means is that this issue is painfully incomplete. There aren't just nine or 10 artists and designers in the punk scene, there are hundreds. All of them working basically in complete obscurity—both from the mainstream world and our own. If anything, I hope that this issue will change that.

Punk isn't just about music. It never has been. Punks are painters and photographers and video artists and designers and printmakers and cartoonists and tattooists and filmmakers and performance artists.

Oh yeah, sometimes punks play guitar and sing too—although you wouldn't know it by reading this issue. I'm sure some of you are pissed off by that fact; I know people I talked to were at least surprised.

"Art and design? You mean there are no bands interviewed?"

That's right. When we started down the path of doing an art and design issue, we made a decision to do it whole-hog. There are no bands interviewed in this issue. There is no fiction in this issue. There is no mail in this issue. The only columns printed are about art and design. Even the DIY files teaches typography for fanzines. I think it's important that for once in 20 years a punk zine does nothing but write about art & design.

Thanks go out to all of the wonderful artists and designers that worked with us to make this issue possible. Their willingness to talk to us, entrust us with their art (sometimes sending the only copies that exist), and in a couple of cases even write for us, was truly an inspiration to everyone here.

That said, I'd also like to express my apologies to both them and you for the poor reproduction quality inherent in black & white newsprint. Much of the art on these pages was done in brilliant colors and with a full tonal range. Unfortunately, that doesn't quite come across. In order to compensate somewhat, we've put all of the artwork printed in these pages up in living color on our web page (www.punkplanet.com). Please check it out and see the art the way it's supposed to be seen.

Extra thanks goes out to the designers who agreed to each do a cover for this issue (all four covers are reproduced on the table of contents page). With no real guidelines (beyond "it needs to say art and design on it") and working under really tight deadlines, they all rose to the occasion.

Finally, I'd like to thank Josh Hooten, without whom this issue really wouldn't have happened. Josh took this issue head-on and interviewed tons of people, designed tons of pages and provided much-needed inspiration during the dark hours. Please check out his column, it serves as a second introduction to this issue.

Artfully yours,

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keep hope alive,
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T r a u m a

Seven Days Awake

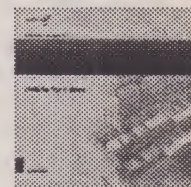
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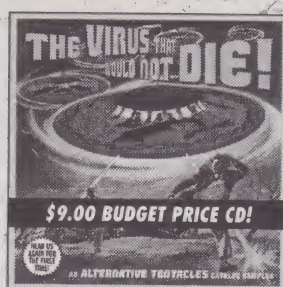
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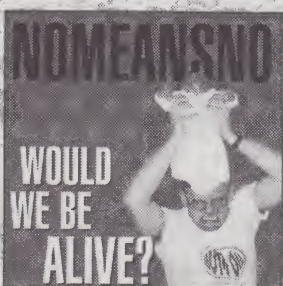
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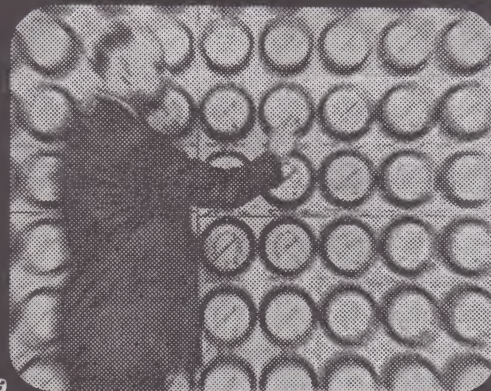


Fig. a

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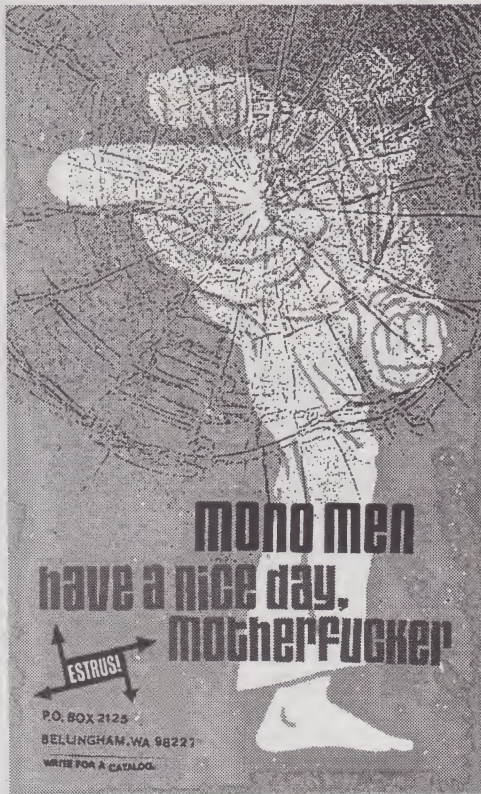
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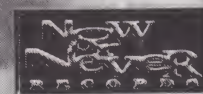
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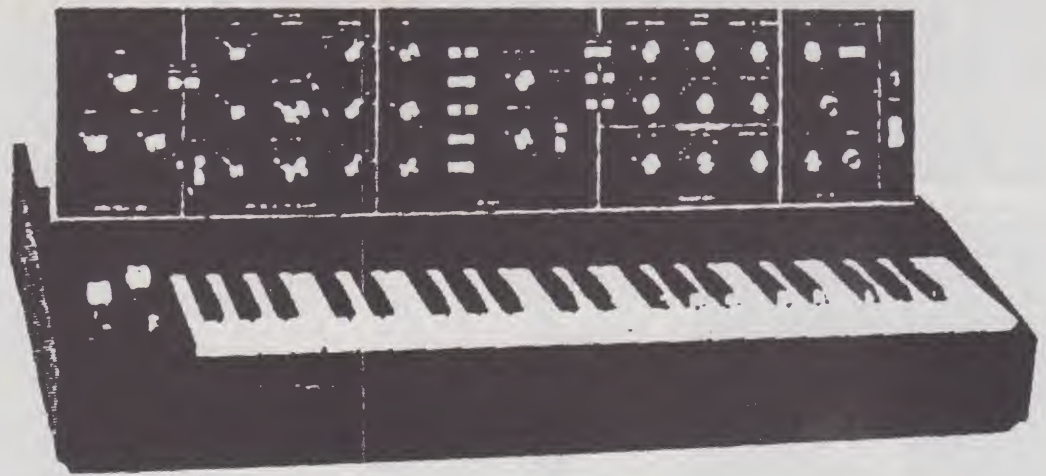
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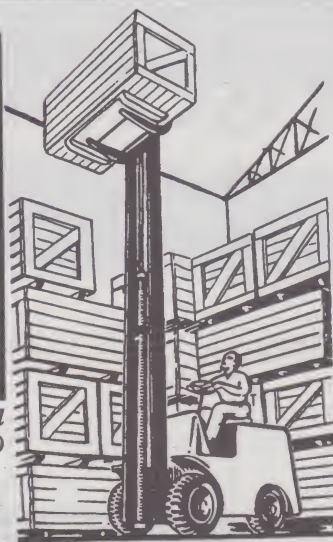
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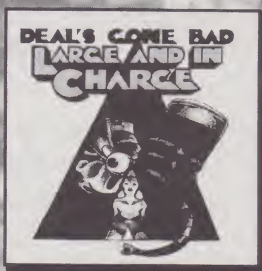
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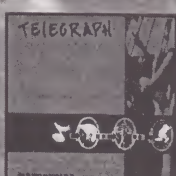


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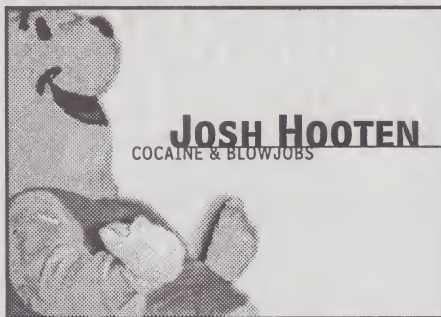
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"Cheers for the Young Idea, so glad that you are here..."
—Chisel

Admittedly, the music is why we're all here; it's the most inspiring and influential force in my life. At 14 years old, I bought Minor Threat's *Out of Step* and something changed in me forever. That record, along with Youth Brigade, Black Flag, Dead Kennedy's, Sex Pistols and all the rest are a major part of who I am today at age 25. Those records sent me down a path I'm still exploring; in those records you can find the basis of my belief system, my morals, my values. Hell, Bad Religion single-handedly got me through my junior year of high school.

It's not just the sound of guitars that change lives, however, the words and the people and the emotions and the guts driving those guitars do too. It's not just the sound, it's the message and the attitude; guitars aren't the only channel through which that message and attitude flows.

FedEx was a friend today. Outside my door at 10 a.m. there were packages from Seth Tobocman, Winston Smith, Art Chantry, Frank Kozik, and Cynthia Connelly full of the art that you now see in the pages that follow. We opened it all up on the picnic table in Sinker's dining room (why there's a picnic table there I know not) and leafed through so much pure brilliance and profoundly inspiring work that I've been walking around in a haze all day, unable to come back down to earth after the morning's visual overload. I spent the rest of the day scanning Paul Drake and Chrissy Piper photos and pictures of Kim Saigh's tattoos—equally brilliant and inspiring work. I can't believe all this stuff is just sitting here in front of me. Looking at it all on that table, I had an overwhelming urge to run out and do everything; I want to get naked and roll around in it. The events and places and pictures and ideas these people are documenting, as well as the books written about or by them are the documents with which we trace our past and inspire us to seize the future. These are our history books; it's an invisible history to most of society, but a valid history none the less.

"Some say history is best made secretly." —Jawbox

In brainstorming and compiling this issue, it came up repeatedly in conversations whether or not art and design was a subject that would hold the readers attention for an entire issue. The repeated answer was, "It should be." It's not just guitars that change people's lives, it's the photographers and illustrators and graphic designers and other artists too. Admittedly, we're all here for the music, but to deny the importance of the visual artist in this scene is to deny the music half its power.

In doing my interviews for this issue, I learned something new and inspiring from every single person I talked to. Talking to all these artists about their lives and their work made me feel totally valid about what I'm doing with my life. It's easy to second guess your work and your choices when you spend your life straying from the beaten path; it's easy to give in to your insecurities and doubts when there is no positive reinforcement. But through talking to these people and getting to see so much of their work, it's gone a long way in validating a lot of my decisions about what I'm doing. It makes me proud to be doing my own thing, knowing that all these other artists are out there doing the same.

The guts it takes for Chrissy Piper (and Paul Kane, her publisher) to put out an art book of photos of punk and hardcore bands and individuals is worthy of all your respect. It's not only a collection of band photos—if it was, it would just be another zine. It's a book that bridges the gap between the art world and our world. It puts our scene into a context where it can be discussed and analyzed in a larger arena. It breaks out of our myopic scene and forces the energy of punk and hardcore to be viewed as an art form; to be taken seriously by people other than us. If we are ever really going to change anything, or make any kind of difference in the real world—the world outside of basement shows and photocopied zines—we're going to have to place ourselves in bigger arenas. All the yelling we're doing at each other only goes to reinforce our already established belief systems. We're talking to ourselves. We're preaching to the converted. Piper's book shows that our photographers and their subjects can and should be taken seriously in the real world.

Paul Drake spends as much of his time as possible on tour with bands, providing himself with a constantly changing view with which to explore his photography, as well as see the world. He sacrifices all kinds of comfort and security in his life, all in the name of pursuing his art and doing what he loves. For Paul, there is no chance to build any kind of financial security, or climb some corporate ladder, or even keep an address for too long, but it's all incidental. The last couple of times Paul passed through Boston, he had less than five dollars in his pocket and a huge smile on his face, talking about the tour he was on and what was up next—no regrets and full of life.

I spent 5 years in art school studying graphic design. Every week when I'd take work into classes for critiques, all these uptight design snobs would tell me my work didn't make enough sense or it wasn't clean enough or some bullshit. All the while, they were bringing in the boringest, most soulless-looking pedestrian crap I'd ever seen in my life—work that was so lifeless they didn't even bother to consider it art or themselves artists. I spent a lot of time wondering if I should even bother trying to be a graphic designer because it was apparent my outlook wasn't meeting with any kind of acceptance or

encouragement. Faculty members more than once suggested that I was in the wrong department, "Perhaps you should try painting." This went on to the point that in my senior year two weeks before I was supposed to graduate, my portfolio teacher told me I wouldn't pass final review because my work wasn't "corporate" enough and that my portfolio had too much punk stuff in it. Five years in school and they wait until two weeks before I'm finished to tell me I was "too punk." Fuck you.

Through all these five years, I was constantly seeing the work of Art Chantry in the pages of the graphic design annuals and awards books these fools held up as the ultimate achievement we should strive for in design. Fools. Chantry's work was such a huge inspiration for me back in school to not sell out and show them what they wanted to see. He showed me I could be a designer and design projects I cared about and loved and not have to bother with these dry-ass corporate capabilities brochures and stuffy annual reports just because that's what the faculty told me I should do. Whenever I'd forget that design was fun, Chantry's work would remind me that it was a blast. Obviously, it was a thrill and an honor to talk to the man and hear him confirm and corroborate all this stuff I'd been relying on for years.

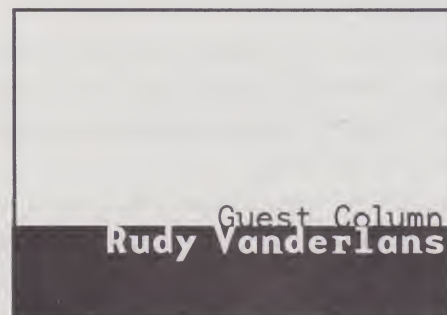
Winston Smith was probably the first visual artist who really affected my life in any profound way from his work with the Dead Kennedys on records like *In God We Trust Inc.* and *Plastic Surgery Disasters* as well as the ubiquitous Dead Kennedys logo that I inscribed thousands of times on notebooks, skateboards, clothing, etc all through junior and senior high school. If I gave the man a nickel for every time I drew that logo somewhere, he'd be retired and sipping fine wine on a beach somewhere in the tropics. I'm sure a lot of you have a similar familiarity with his work. At age 14, his collages were spooky and cool. Over the years they start to make sense; the meaning becomes more complex and applicable the longer you live with them. Smith is partially responsible for my pursuing art ten years ago and subsequently for me doing what I'm doing today. The man is a legend! So much so I was afraid to call him and ask him for an interview because I felt so far out of my league. But it turns out he's a really nice, very funny guy who is very easy to talk to. He's no less a legend to me now that I've talked to him, but far less spooky.

Kim Saigh puts art on people's bodies with a tattoo gun—art that you wouldn't dream of covering up or having removed. I saw her work in a tattoo magazine a few months back and was happy to find out that she lived in Chicago. Sinker and I went down to Guilty and Innocent to check out her work and since the timing was right for the art and design issue I was really excited to include her. The black and white reproductions do no justice to her work, so please check them out at the Punk Planet website to see them in their full splendor. Kim is very gracious and easy to talk to I found out a lot about tattoos from the other side of the gun.

If there was ever an issue of Punk Planet I would urge you to read cover to cover, it is this one. You may not think the visual art of this scene is as important as the music or the live performances, but read the words of some of the most talented artists working underground today and you'll understand that you're mistaken. Listening to them talk about their work and the

lives they lead you'll find inspiration to do whatever you're doing whether it's art or just living your life. These people are important. They're documenting the invisible history in their medium of choice and though it may be a history ignored by most of society, it's still ours and it's still important.

I want to thank Chrissy, Paul, Art, Winston, and Kim for taking the time to talk to me and letting us reproduce their work, as well as Cynthia Connolly, Frank Kozik, Seth Tobocman and the fine fellas at House Industries, as well as all the contributors for making this art and design issue my favorite issue of *Punk Planet* I've worked on. It's an honor to work with each of you



Introspection

During the early and mid 80s it was becoming clear that graphic design was in a funk. A deep blue funk. What was supposed to be an advanced form of visual communication, Swiss International Style graphic design, was being cranked out like ground meat. Most of the work looked tired and predictable. You knew exactly what to expect from your heroes and heroines and they delivered on cue, like they were operating on automatic pilot. It was good work, it just didn't emote. It was time for a change, and with *Emigre* we were lucky enough to arrive on the scene exactly when things were ripe to explode. And change things did. We spent the next fifteen years pretty much exhausting the subject, pointing out the bankruptcy of late modernism and discussing the possibilities of new approaches in design and the arrival of that odd little gray box, the Macintosh computer.

That was a lot of fun.

Currently, however, it feels like the funk is back. Distressed type, homemade type, vernacular type, striked thru type, underlined type, overlapping type, more overlapping type, text columns butting up, text columns overlapping, out of focus and ambiguous imagery, forced justified spacing, retro themes, and in-your-face deadpan photography. And the all pervasive look of decay. Decay is big in design today, making New Orleans as the 1997 AIGA Conference destination oddly appropriate.

What once upset the *status quo* have become run-of-the-mill solutions. One bankruptcy replaces the next. The number of books being published on "cutting edge design" is evidence of the complete exhaustion of what initially looked like an honest-to-goodness savior of graphic design.

The cutting edge has become suspiciously crowded, blunted, by overexposure. I'd love to coin the term "the cutting edge is dead," but

that, too, has grown stale. It's not that the work looks bad; it just looks not new. It looks familiar, like something we can now all enjoy and understand or simply dismiss, instead of respond to emotionally. We don't even get riled up over it like we used to. It looks respectable. It's produced professionally by design and ad agencies with budgets that can buy all the distressed typefaces money can buy, with the designers thrown in for good measure, since they, too, can be bought, if the price is right or the exposure worthwhile.

Unfortunately, the work has ceased to communicate. Regardless of the sheer force and magnitude with which it is now spoonfed to the masses, it has lost its ability to do what it was meant to do: draw attention and engage readers.

Meanwhile we occupy ourselves with endless discussions on whether to call ourselves information architects, auteurs, authors or artists—anything to distance ourselves from that depleted designation of graphic design.

Sound miserable enough?

It was bound to happen. Actually, if history tells us anything, it's that it repeats itself time and again. So here we are at the next juncture with things looking rather bleak. Last time we were present, some really interesting work started to surface. We're ready

for it, but we're not going to wait for it. There's great design aplenty. It's always present—it's just not always the most widely published or the most obvious or the most cool. And it's the kind that will not be co-opted by corporate America because it cannot be easily codified and put to use to sell the next great widget. Or can it?

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Punks often deny the power—and message—of design. "Design" is, to many, the self-conscious packaging of something that should be able to speak for itself. When I was younger, I had an intense distrust of anything that I thought of as "designed." This meant, in practice, that any element of any product that wasn't purely functional was just so much showing off. Showmanship was "fake," while seriousness was "real."

If you wanted to make a record, who cared what it looked like? The music was all that mattered. Public Image Limited's *Album*, dressed up as a generic piece of "music" seemed, on a certain level, ideal to me then. No musicians were listed, no pictures, no clever liner notes. Just song titles. Functional, and so very "undesigned."

I didn't know what the hell I was talking about.

PIL, in its heyday, was in reality the master of using art and design to actually say something which added to the experience of listening to their music. PIL's *Metal Box*, an album of several unconventionally formatted slabs of vinyl sold in a real metal box, was a dramatic statement that the music inside was entirely different, and could not be restrained inside a mere cardboard record sleeve. There was a sense of drama to the experience of listening to that album. This wasn't merely the music but an object, a heavy thing that could not be kept with the rest of your music. In fact, its design forced you to keep it physically apart from your "normal" records, to let it stand alone on your shelf. It was a great album, and a neat piece of industrial design that made you conscious of what PIL were trying to do. And *Album* was, despite my confusion, in fact a statement about the power of packaging, and the way in which the design of a thing disrupts our perceptions about the message of the thing itself.

Design is more than just the packaging of substance—it is the context in which we actually experience that substance, and it cannot be understood separately. When you pick up that Green Day album and look at the colorful, willfully immature cover art, your perceptions of that band and their music are affected even before you turn the stereo on. When you buy an album by Shellac and the album is sold in a piece of hand-stamped cardboard covered with spare industrial iconography, your image of a bunch of gritty, no-nonsense sonic purists is reinforced. When Tar walked on stage playing handmade aluminum guitars with a dull, matte finish, their instruments became tools. The metallic sheen of their music became the tangible, physical manifestation of angle grinders and welding torches calling forth the roar of factories and the darkness of burned out industrial neighborhoods.

To separate design from music, or design from cultural experience generally, is to woefully miss the point. Cultural production is all context. The meaning of any given building, song, car, painting, sculpture, record jacket, book, poem, zine, shirt, hat, dress, pants or shoes is meaningless on its own. Wearing Doc Martens means, literally, nothing. But placed in the context of 1983, 1988, 1993 or 1997, wearing Doc Martens can mean four very different things about you and the message you are sending to others who see you. The design of those shoes said something very specific in 1983, and say something equally specific in 1997—though the message has entirely changed. But your choice in how you design your own appearance crafts your "message" to others about your own cultural identity. When I wear my suit to work, people perceive me differently than when I'm wearing sloppy clothes in a club. In fact, even the kind of suit, or the kind of sloppy clothes, tell people something about me. Marshall McLuhan once said "The medium is the message" when discussing television, and so it is with design. Design is not some neutral conduit for substance—design is part of the substance, and sometimes the entirety of the substance.

Fugazi have simple, muted album covers. They were simple, unadorned clothing, and play shows with little or no set design. This is as much a statement of the power of "design" as some Frank Gehry museum in Bilbao, Spain constructed entirely out of titanium sheets. We are saturated with hidden messages that are transmitted by the design of our world. When PP put Cynthia Connolly's photos of musicians and their cars on their website, the design of those cars reflected, reinforced and/or undermined

our perceptions of those musicians and their music. While they didn't design those cars themselves, they chose those cars, and they send a message by driving them. Your apartment, or room at home, or loft, or house—wherever the hell you live—is a constantly shifting palate of design which channels your tastes into the physical world. In many ways, it moves beyond being a representation of your tastes and becomes the substance of who you are. The signifier merges with the signified, and the commodification of our lives is complete. You are a commodity, whether a member of the Young Republicans or the Revolutionary Communist Party. The design of your life and the design of the cultural productions surrounding you define your meaning as a commodity and alerts others to your value and use. I am no different than a car, except that my driver is somewhat more difficult to see. I am a cultural production, a piece of industrial design, crafted by my tastes which were crafted by my culture. Don't imagine that the next thing you buy is only defined by its function. That thing, whether a plunger or a necktie or a pair of red braces or a bunch of shoelaces or a car or a house or a chair or anything you can think of, is a message. Received by you and forwarded to the world.

Design. Resistance is futile.

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I hate basketball. I have felt this way for a very long time, possibly ever since high school PE class, when it became apparent, to the immense amusement of my classmates and the utter disgust of my beetle-browed thug of a teacher, Mr. Dulske, that I was incapable of walking and bouncing a ball at the same time.

I've held off saying anything about this before, largely out of respect for my friend Tim from Avail, who is an avid basketball player. I realize my loathing for the sport is completely irrational, much like my similarly passionate hatred for such relatively innocuous things as mustaches and chewing gum.

And while mustaches and gum do little to justify their existence besides concealing ugly upper lips and keeping dentists in business, a great deal of good can be found in basketball. It's excellent exercise, gives men who are otherwise emotionally inarticulate an excuse to get together and yell and pat each other on the butt, and it has provided a route out of the ghetto for quite a few impoverished young black men.

Still, I don't like it, and here's why: Most mornings I try to start my day with several sets of t'ai chi, the Chinese martial art that I have been practicing for some 20 years now. Although it contains some fairly violent-looking kicks and punches, most of the set involves slow, graceful motion, a

concentration on one's breathing, and a heightened awareness of the interplay between body, mind and the universe within and without.

The place where I practice is right next to a basketball court, and it may seem like such a little thing, but the difference is so great: on mornings when I get there before the basketball players do, I often experience feelings of enormous peace, an ability to reflect on my life, art, and all the rest of those cosmic things people are supposed to reflect on.

But if I heard the dread thump-thump of an approaching basketball (for some reason, people often feel compelled to bounce their ball all the way to the park), my heart sinks. I know that soon the peaceful morning silence will be shattered by the incessant clank and clunk of pavement and backboard and, if more than one or two guys (it's virtually never girls) are involved, a great uproar of grunts, groans, and jocular expletives straight out of a Michelob commercial.

I've gotten used to the idea that most heterosexual men are unable to gather in public without creating an uproar that might be more appropriate in a colony of barking seals, so I can sort of shrug off the sub-verbal racket generated by a pickup basketball game.

But what really gets to me is the sheer moronically repetitive energy with which some guys, often not even as athletic as me, will spend hours bouncing that infernal ball and trying to throw it through the hoop. I often feel like telling them, "Look, try t'ai chi instead. It's quieter, more dignified, and infinitely better for you."

Of course I don't ever actually say that (well, I guess I am now), but some of the times I am most tempted to is when the offending basketball player(s) are Chinese. It seems like such a ridiculous juxtaposition, that people born into a culture that produced such a magnificent contribution to human well-being as t'ai chi are instead struggling (usually with not much success) to master a grossly inferior American sport. The final straw came today when a little Chinese boy of six or eight stopped trying to throw a soccer ball through the hoop to ask me what I was doing.

Now I'm not big on the cultural identity thing. All too often, attempts to "get in touch" or "stay true" to one's roots become hopelessly entangled with reactionary sentiments like racism and nationalism. But when a culture has produced a school of thought or design for living that is clearly of great value, it seems a shame to abandon it in favor of something that is more flavor of the moment.

The reason young Asian-Americans would rather play basketball than learn t'ai chi is not that basketball is easier or better, but because for the most part they would rather be American than Asian. Which in itself is not a bad thing; I think one of the reasons Asians have tended to be more successful than other racial minorities is that they've been quicker to adapt, embrace and absorb mainstream American culture.

American culture, you inquire? I made the mistake of putting the same two words together while talking to a surly Dutch linguist in Iceland last month, and his immediate, if predictable, riposte was, "But of course you Americans have no culture." Being the rude bastard I often am, I of course had to remind him that whether he had a high, low, or no regard for it, America not only had a culture, but had become the richest country in the history of the world by selling it to him.

No US troops were required to put McDonald's in Amsterdam or Disneyland in Paris or MTV on every cable network in Europe, I reminded him. You guys *wanted* it, begged for it, are paying through the nose for it.

The same goes for us homies, of course. For all the griping we like to do about corporate and mass culture, somebody must be buying it, and while I don't suppose you or I are the biggest consumers, we don't live in a vacuum. If we didn't at least once in a while turn on the TV or pick up a newspaper or magazine, we'd soon run out of things to complain about.

But I digress into levity when in fact I have something rather more serious to say. The fact is that American culture involves a good deal more than McDonald's and MTV; it includes the sum total of what we Americans, all of us, choose to *cultivate* (if you knew your Latin, you'd realize that the similarity between the words is no coincidence) in ourselves.

So this magazine you're holding is culture. So are the punk rock records you listen to, and the designs you paint on your jacket, and the piercings and tattoos you wear or don't wear. If I were as poncey an intellectual as some people like to imagine, I could go on to discuss whether it counts as high culture or low culture or subculture or counterculture, but for our present purposes, it's just plain old culture, and, like it or not, you're part of it.

What's the difference between culture and society? Well, it's not all that easy to differentiate between the two. If you want to be simplistic, you could say that society is what people are and culture is what they do. But there's no place where one leaves off and the other begins; a society without culture or a culture without society is an oxymoron. Can't happen. It's a lot like matter and energy, as those of you who are down with the Theory of Relativity will easily see.

Speaking of relativity, my aunt was saying... No, that's another story, but seriously, I recently got into a rather heated Internet discussion on cultural relativism. That's the (rather fuzzy headed, in my opinion) notion that all cultures are essentially of equal value, and that it's arrogant or worse to suggest that any particular culture has more worth than another.

One of the most fervent defenders of the latter idea was Joe Selby, one of the leading intellectual lights of alt.punk (to be fair, he's got many redeeming features). Joe generally agrees with me on most issues, but on this one, he was impassioned in his denunciations of my claim that, for example, a culture in which women are relatively free to pursue their own lives and goals is superior to one which keeps women locked up, treats them as the property of men, and ritually cuts off the clitorises of little girls (generally without anesthetic, I might add).

A while back, especially in the 1960s and '70s, it became common to idealize other cultures while at the same time condemning our own American (or Euro-American) culture. The Native Americans were a peaceful, loving people who lived in tune with nature while the European-Americans were murderous brutes who raped and pillaged their way across the virgin continent, etc. etc... Marxists (including the original one, Karl himself) and anarchists both waxed rhapsodic about the preindustrial, or even prehistoric, world, where, it was assumed, all was peace, love and harmony.

The only trouble with this pretty picture was that there wasn't much to back it up. Nobody knows for sure how people lived in prehistoric times for the obvious reason that we have no history of them, duh. But we do know that all was not hunky-dory and peachy-keen in North America or South America or Africa before the European imperialists came marauding in.

In fact, tribalism and warfare and racism and random brutality are not uniquely European. We need only look at recent events in Africa, the genocide in Rwanda, for instance, to realize that people are quite capable of mass murder on a horrifying scale without a honky in sight. The only thing that you can say about Euro-Americans and violence is that they have thus far proved more successful at it than anyone else.

That might sound a bit flippant, but it shouldn't obscure the fact that the whole history of the world involves various peoples trying to impose their will and their values on other peoples, by persuasion and example if possible, by violence and even extermination if necessary. You don't have to like it to know that it's true.

Nor do you have to defend it, especially when it involves your own country. I think nearly all of us could agree that America, and Europe before it, don't have a particularly pretty record when it comes to imperialism and colonialism. Nor do we have much of a tradition of valuing other people's cultures; the principle of "manifest destiny" (which presupposed that God had given the white man the right and duty to "civilize" all of North America) didn't leave room for the possibility that Native American culture might have anything at all to teach us.

That narrow viewpoint resulted in a great loss for Europeans and Native Americans alike. Native American culture was nearly wiped out, living on today only in a vestigial and debased form, and Europeans missed out on learning how to live well and lightly on the land from the people who had been doing so for many thousands of years.

But does that mean that Native American and European-American culture are of equal value? Maybe in some abstract sense, but you try convincing 260 million Americans to live in teepees and wigwams, to wear loin-cloths and live off grubs and berries. And while you're at it, explain how they're going to have to give up their rock 'n' roll and their televisions and their malls and their symphonies and their Internet and their designer labels. Hell, I don't think you could convince many Native Americans to give up all of that.

And yet everything I named, and a million more things that are an integral part of everyday life, were produced not by Native American culture, but by European-American culture. Sure, you can say you would gladly give up your house and your car and your punk rock and your Manic Panic hair dye in order to live in a peaceful native village of yore, but the fact is that even your notion of what Native American life would have been like is a European-American construct, delivered to you through books, movies, television, and schools, all of which are of Euro-American origin.

Obviously things would have been very different if the Europeans had stayed in Europe and left North Americans to its original inhabitants. By the same token, Europe would have been very different if the various Huns and Visigoths and Saxons and Vikings had all stayed where they belonged and

not gone barging in where they weren't wanted. But it's a little late to change that now, and I don't think all the white Americans are going to be hopping on a boat back to Europe anytime soon, either.

That doesn't mean we can't look at our history critically and condemn the actions of our ancestors. Although they undoubtedly believed they were doing the right thing at the time, human values have evolved since then. Part of that evolution has been our ability to learn from our (or our ancestors') past mistakes. A hundred years ago, most people thought nothing of sending the army into the West to shoot any Indians who wouldn't move off their land; today, most people would be horrified at such an idea.

One of the Western world's most significant cultural trends of the 20th century has been the way it has turned a critical eye on itself. Whether in art or politics (as if there were really any great difference between the two), we've watched Europeans and Americans alike go through a traumatic process of deconstruction, tearing apart and reevaluating nearly everything that makes up this funny creature we call our civilization.

And it was good that we did. Not just because an unexamined life, as Socrates put it, is not worth living, but because the unbridled arrogance of Western man could have, unchecked, led us to ultimate disaster. It still may, but for rather different reasons.

The dominant theme of the latter part of the 20th century has been an enormous crisis in confidence on the part of Western civilization. It's been particularly evident in America, which during and after the Vietnam era, had what in an individual would probably be called a nervous breakdown.

It's as if our whole culture, our whole society, began to lose faith in itself. While I would never recommend that we go back to the days of thinking that the world had been divinely ordained as our oyster, I think it's possible to go too far in the other direction as well. When you find yourself saying that *everything* about America sucks, that there are no redeeming features to our political or economic system, nothing of true or lasting value to our culture, then you're at the other extreme, and I think you're being just as wacky as the *Amerika über alles* crowd.

Art is the language of culture, and it is in art that we can see clear evidence of the conflicted way we feel about ourselves. Some of us hold to the Brechtian view that art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it (though in my experience hammers generally do a lot more smashing than shaping). Others find themselves more attuned to Wilde, who insisted that life imitates art rather than the other way around. And of course there are always the masses of people who think of art primarily as something you hang on the walls of motel rooms.

But when we look a bit more deeply, it becomes obvious that the art produced by a certain culture in a given time tells us as much as if not more about that culture than all the history books could ever do. That's why when we look back on the 20th century, we can see that we've been living in a time of tremendous dislocation and disorientation. And it's also, I predict, why we will see a great upsurge in both the quality and quantity of art produced by our culture as it begins to regain its footing, to realize that despite all the (often justifiable) self-criticism and self-doubt we've engaged in during recent years, there is much to value and be proud of.

Much of 20th century art, especially the branches thought of as higher or classical art, like painting, music, poetry, drama, and literature, is shot through with a sort of cultural schizophrenia. Abstraction, minimalism, dissonance and the romanticization of chaos can be seen everywhere from Dada to the more abrasive varieties of punk rock. While this approach had its beginnings in artists' response to a world that seemed to be spinning out of control and increasingly ruled by machines or machinelike human beings, it long ago ceased to be anything radical or challenging.

Instead, it became the mainstream; the handful of artists who continued to pursue ideals of beauty and truth and craftsmanship were generally sneered at, shut out of the museums and galleries by critics and curators, dismissed as hopelessly retrograde sentimentalists. Even in the world of punk rock, those who chose to employ traditional concepts of melody, harmony and lyricism, i.e. the pop-punkers, have been condemned as being somehow less "real" or relevant.

This brings up an interesting question, though, and one which goes to the heart of what is or is not art. I think we all understand that "beautiful" art does not need to focus exclusively on beautiful subject matter. I give you an example from personal experience: on the cover of my band's first album is a photograph of a pulp mill belching huge clouds of toxic smoke into the atmosphere. Apart from some computer enhancement of the colors, the picture was printed pretty much the way I took it, and it has a certain haunting beauty to it.

And yet the reality of what that picture represents is anything but beautiful. It consists of a deafening noise, an offensive smell, and tons upon tons of air and water pollution that have over the years probably been responsible for thousands of cancers and respiratory illnesses and a reduced quality of life for all those who live downwind or downstream from the plant.

But while the picture doesn't show any of this, neither does it serve as an advertisement for pulp mills. I don't think anyone would look at it and say, "Gee, I'd like to have one of those mills in my neighborhood."

Where, then, does the beauty come from, and how, through art, is something enormously ugly turned into a thing of beauty? And why is it that one artist might paint a picture of war or violence or a toxic waste dump that is nearly as disturbing as the original subject, while another can create a picture that, while it doesn't mask that reality, compels us to look at it, to contemplate it, to even be ennobled by it?

I would argue that it's a way of seeing, and that art which has no moral standpoint, that does not originate from any sense of esthetic values, only adds to the ugliness and chaos, whereas art which simultaneously sees the ugliness but also presents a more beautiful alternative offers the possibility of transcendence that is at the core of the human experience.

Much of modern art has lacked this moral and aesthetic standpoint; its philosophical grounding, if any, has been pure nihilism. And once again, if you know your Latin, you'll be aware that nihilism comes directly from the word for "nothing." Believing in nothing has a certain visceral appeal, especially for the young and angry, but what we believe serves as the foundation for all else that we do. You don't need to be an architect to know that anything built on a nonexistent foundation is not going to have much substance or duration.

In my years working with bands at Lookout Records, one of the things I constantly tried to tell them was to respect themselves and to respect their art. Not in the sense of being pompous or egotistical, but of developing a quiet confidence that what they had to say was important and worthwhile, and should never be dismissed as just some kids goofing around in a garage. Some of those kids went on to make a distinct mark on the popular culture of our times; others just had a lot of fun, but to me the important thing was that they did their best, that they saw themselves, despite their working class origins or their identification with the punk rock subculture, as having something to say that was every bit as important as what was being said in the galleries and theaters and symphony halls of the world.

But it all comes back to having something to believe in, starting with yourself. It might be easier, on the surface, to construct a three-chord pop punk tune than to compose a symphony, but that doesn't mean there aren't plenty of lousy symphonies and great three-chord punk songs. If you can create something, regardless of the format, that lifts up people's hearts and minds, that makes them feel, even for a fleeting instant, the possibility of something more than the petty mundane existence that we forever seem to be mired in, then you're a great artist. If, on the other hand, you can only make a loud noise or a picture of the unresolved chaos in which you dwell, then it doesn't matter how much fame or fortune or acclaim you get because you're a self-indulgent wanker. To put it still more bluntly: The artist makes love to his or her public. Anything else, and you're just jerking off.

A couple of additional notes, one which pertains to the notion of cultural relativism mentioned earlier: recently a local girl wrote a review of a concert which concluded, "I guess maybe white people just shouldn't try to play reggae." Now it's my personal opinion that nobody of any color should try to play reggae, but we'll leave that out. The writer (who was white herself) was being blatantly, if unconsciously, racist, of course, though I think what stands out even more is her blatant idiocy.

If you don't see my point immediately, try turning it around. What if someone were to say, "I don't think black people should even try to play classical music." Almost anybody can see that that's both racist and ridiculous; why is it any less so to suggest that white people, because of their race, are incapable of playing a certain style of music?

I'd come down harder on the girl, of course, if I hadn't been guilty myself of saying similar things in the past. I've often been dismissive of white funk and reggae acts, even of white ska acts, until the Specials (half of them, anyway) and Operation Ivy and Rancid and many more groups made it obvious that no brand of music belongs exclusively to any race of people.

By the same token, you've probably heard people refer to "World" or "World Beat" music and automatically assumed that they were talking about African or Indian or Balinese or Inuit music; anything, in other words, except music made by Europeans and Americans. This in a time when music made by Europeans and Americans (many of them of races other than white, of course) is listened to by more people than all other kinds of music combined. Hey, I know we're guilty of lots of crimes against nature and humanity, but we don't even live in the world anymore?

The other thing: Last issue I rather casually and cavalierly dismissed

the politics of one of my favorite bands, Chumbawamba. A friend of mine said that maybe I should take a look at their Website (www.chumba.com) before shooting my mouth off again, so I did.

And while there's still much that Chumbawamba have said which I can't possibly agree with (their support for the IRA, for example), the first thing I found on their Website was an essay by singer Alice Nutter about The Prodigy's "Smack My Bitch Up" which was the single most intelligent commentary I've seen on that subject, and certainly expressed my own feelings about the song better than I've yet been able to do.

So I apologize to Chumbawamba, and give them props for using their newfound fame to do more than just gad about in limousines like so many other newly minted rock stars (The Prodigy included). The amount of work that clearly went into their website is prodigious, and I recommend that any and all of you take a look at it and see what you think.

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That's all for now; as usual, all verbal brickbats and effusive outpourings of praise can be directed to your favorite motherfucker with an e-mail address c/o punkplanet.com or to llivernore@aol.com.



It all started back in Grade 4 at St. Joseph's Catholic School in the uppity suburb of Markham, Ontario. My teacher for both Grades 4 and 5 was Ms. Patenaude—as in "Miz Bronte! Miz Bronte! When will I find me a fella?"—*Career Girls*, Mike Leigh, go see it. Miz Patenaude was a real hardballer all right. She once gave me a detention because I did the worm with my arms—y'know, when both of your hands are locked and you do that wiggly motion?—right after she told us that she didn't want to see any more breakdancing in the classroom. Heh. Smartassness had somehow crept into my persona at an early age and never did quite manage to leave the building.

It was in this classroom full of boogaloo track suits and XXL shakerknit sweaters that I had a calling of sorts. There was the arts and crafts portion of the day which, of course, is like the universal get-to-relax-and-dick-off chunk of the school year right. Well, during one of these popsicle stick 'n' egg carton fests, Ms. Patenaude whipped out the bigass bottles of paint and said "OK kids, I just want you to do whatever the heck you want with these paints." Seeing as how my black sheep-like ways were settling in so nicely, I was gonna dare to be different. I took a piece of scrap cardboard, stuck it on a pencil, dabbed that into the paints in front of me, and made sort of a lightning storm meets barfy-colors-blend scenario. I thought it was the shit. Now I think it's just shit. But when Ms. Patenaude strolled on by to check out our masterpieces in progress, she

saw me with that makeshift paintbrush and puke-o painting and she exclaimed, "I love you Patricia!!!" She also proceeded to plant a big wet one on my cheek, leaving an imprint with that pasty lipstick that teachers seem to love. It was then, I had decided, that Ms. Patenaude was pretty fuckin' cool. Hell, my friends and I even named our secret little lunch club after her car's license plate numbers. Dorks who were too wimpy to play tetherball at lunchtime, you say? Perhaps. But it was she who made me stop and say to myself "Hot damn! I'm good at SOMETHING! Yeah!"

TIME ELAPSES... Grade 5—Jabbed Adam Atkinson in the neck because I liked him. He was not impressed... Grade 6—Punched Lorne DiCaprio in the face and broke his glasses. He was downright pissed... Grade 7—Switched schools due to St. Patrick's providing a closer bus route. Decided to put my fightin' ways behind me, heh heh... Grade 8—Was diagnosed as being a "gifted" whippersnapper. Finally, my smartass-ness had been validated. That was the year I kicked back with mom's ham sandwiches and watched the world go on by. Well, not really, but when you create sentences THAT vague, people prolly just skim over them anyway and go straight for the humpin'. Instant gratification in and out the wah-hoo for me and for you baby. Incidentally, Grade 8 was also the year I borrowed my older sister's copy of *The Queen Is Dead*. The rest is, as they say, hist-o-ree.

By Grade 9, I was a full-on "freak," as was the terminology back then, and had wisely opted for the public schooling of Markham High. Artsy-fartsiness had sunken into my all of my pubescent pores and had taken over my body. I was going to be the smart and funny girl at school who always wore black. And wore lots of that "silver" jewelry that turned your skin green. Here's a pretty amusing piece I wrote for my English class in Grade 9:

Why Am I Me? (by Patti Kim)

Personally, I think I'm different because, on the exterior, people would probably think I'm some sort of weirdo. However, I think I just look strange to other people in this school because they all dress the same to me. Most of them are called "preps". They wear their same name-brand clothes and as for me, I tend to believe in individuality. [oh, this is rich!—Patti, sorry, keep reading now!] I try to stay as much as possible away from fads and "what's in." Quite a few of my friends are preppy and I guess that's all right for them but it just wouldn't work for me. I like dressing the way I do (a lot of black) and I love listening to the "weird" music I listen to. My friends are pretty cool and so they can accept me. Then again, there are "snobs" who only associate with themselves. I'm not like that. I am who I am and I like that person.

Hee hee! I wrote that 10 years ago! Am I punkasfuck or what?! Naw, I was just a silly goil...and well, kinda still am. Anyhoo!

I don't want to dwell for too long on my high school years. That could be a whole column in itself. Let's just say it was a time of ups 'n' downs 'n' all arounds. I did a lot of growing up in those four years and one of the things that helped me get through it all was my love for art. I had decided that math and science did nothing for me...I was going to excel in my art classes dagnabit. And that's exactly what I did! I went on to win a fistful of

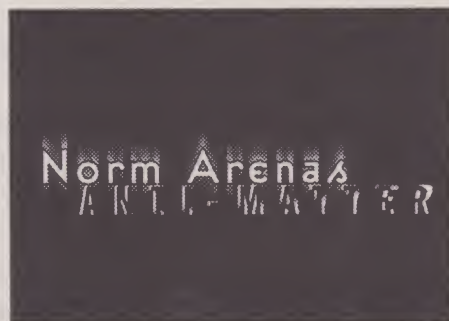
awards and a small scholarship. I went to Arts Camp for four years in a row. I took so much pride in my sketchbook and my art projects. And on an unrelated note, I also ditched my prom to go see *ALIEN SEX FIEND!!* While the rest of my graduating class was off getting sloshed and laid, I was scrambling to catch fluorescent skulls and bones that ASF were whipping out into the crowd. Ohhh, to be a teen again!

If high school was one big gray blur, then college was an even blurrier blur. The Ontario College of Art was my post-secondary kaka of choice. They recently changed their name to the Ontario College of Art and Design. Whatever! I can remember thinking that I was going to be with my fellow freakamazoids. It was going to be soooo cool. Living, breathing, creating—we were going to be ARTISTS damnit! So I was a bit of a naïve pup back then—cut me some slack, will ya? I'm still a creating fiend but I just have a hard time actually calling myself an "artist." Going to art school for four years can rilly turn you off of that word. And just for the record, you would think there would be so many rad kids to befriend going to art skool, but in my crotchety opinion (as they all are), such is not the case. Just because you dress like a hipkid doesn't mean you are one. Miz Mizanthrope Patti Kim here wasn't exactly one for cocktail party conversation in the college circles, ya dig. Welp, dems da breaks!

Don't get me wrong though! Oh no no no no! There were some positive things that came out of that whole experience—which I can likely count on one hand—but I think it's safe to say that art school is kinda like lousy sex. You're just left in the end saying to yourself "Is that all?" Kinda like how you feel at the end of these here columns. Woop—just kidding! (as Patti gets pelted with rotten eggs by her PP siblings...)

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Hey hey! You got something to say to me bubba?! I am merely pocket change away. Patti Kim, Box 68568, 360A Bloor St. W, Toronto ON, M5S 1X1 Canada OR via my new e-mail addy: fhabzine@interlog.com But I'll warn you now—I am slow with mail in general. In fact, I yam a SLUG. I'm also a dork because I accidentally delete e-mail sometimes. Don't ask me how I manage to do these things that I dooo...things were a little confusing for a while between three different e-mail accounts I guess. Thanks to botan rice candy for keeping this party going, going, going...aaand she's gone! *POOF!*



My friend Joe just moved here from Boston. He's the quiet type, so whenever we hang out I feel like I have to work twice as hard to entertain him. And when I finally get him to open up, it's almost twice as hard to calm the guy down. I guess that's why I like him: He reminds me of myself sometimes.

Joe and I have this ongoing joke about a fictional work called *Norm's Book Of Rules*. There are different chapters for almost all of life's experiences and different crests of wisdom for almost any given situation. For example, Rule #28B in the chapter entitled "So You Think You Like Music": Never admit to buying any record whose band members' average age is ten years younger than yours. Rule #46A in the chapter entitled "So You're In A Band": If you are unable to find someone who will tell you that your band is their all-time favorite, break-up should be an immediate consideration. And my personal favorite, Rule #2C in the chapter we like to call "So You Think You're A Fanzine Editor": Before you invest in the latest version of Quark XPress, try a spell-checking program instead.

Tongue in cheek, for sure, but there are certainly lessons to be learned. So with that, I've decided to allow *Punk Planet* the permission to publish an excerpt from my book—a condensed version of the eighth chapter, "So You Think You're A Graphic Designer."

Rule #1A: *The ability to buy a computer does not make you an artist.* This mentality is probably the root of our problems. The widespread availability of desktop publishing software turned every Tom, Dick, and Harry into Pablo Picasso, and instead of advancing our methods of artistic capability we've taken a collective two steps backwards. How many times have we seen creativity traded in for a bad font?

Rule #1B: *If you have to use a computer, keep it simple: Never use more than two fonts on the same page. Three is pushing it. Four is almost always overkill.* Man overboard, anyone? Perhaps it's just the way we've been raised that we think bigger is better. The more the merrier. Well, let's just forget it right now before your fanzine warrants the bellows that the 1993 Equal Vision fanzine still manages to create almost five years later. My good friend Steve and I still laugh about that time of crisis when, only halfway finished with the layout, he yelled, "Oh, crap! I ran out of fonts!"

Rule #9A: *A good-looking sleeve cannot save a bad record.* It's kind of a shame, really. So often do I run across records that look like more hard work and time was spent on the packaging than on the actual music itself. I've noticed a growing trend of records where the band opted to skim the recording budget in order to make that full-color glossy cover with the silkscreen labels. And then we scratch our heads, wondering how come a 7" single costs four dollars these days.

Rule #9B: *There is nothing more annoying than when the spine of a CD appears upside-down when stood erect.* Seriously folks, if anything on your record is done right, let this be the one. Check, check, and double-check!

Rule #9C: *The record label logo should never be bigger than the name of your band.* Here's my pet peeve: It seems that, at some point in time, hardcore labels decided that there was some necessity to make their names a selling point for the records they released. For example, the size of the Revelation logo on the first Into Another CD is almost offensive. It takes up a quarter of the 5" work space! Victory and Dischord are also occasionally guilty of this crime. Cheers to Jade Tree, Sub Pop, and 4AD for creating visually engaging logos without overshadowing their artists.

Rule #9C; Amendment A: Some may argue that the Revelation logos on both Texas is the Reason records are too big and, personally, I agree. But you have to understand: I like Jordan. And he almost made me feel like I was personally insulting him when I told him "I didn't want his logo obstructing the gentle nature of our artwork." What could I do?

Rule #16A: *Unless your fanzine is designed specifically for the art community, it should be text and not graphic-oriented. In other words, anyone who cares about content should sacrifice art for legibility.* It's a hot source of debate, I know, but let's make a practical show of hands: How many people actually bother to read Raygun? If you can create a handsome visual to accentuate the text that you've (hopefully) put a lot of time and sweat into writing, then that's the goal. When your so-called design means having to turn the magazine 65 degrees to read it, then you've defeated your purpose in full. A fanzine should want to facilitate their readers into reading its content. I'm happy to say that *Punk Planet* is a model for its approach in combining both aspects.

Rule #16B: *If you can express yourself clearly and in a way that will attract other people, then there is no reason why you can't do a fanzine.* Perhaps one of the most disheartening events of my career: I was reading some mail when I came across an *Anti-Matter* fan letter. The letter was pretty involved, showed a clear train of thought and, apparently, a talent for writing. Before signing his note, the author wrote, "I'd love to do a fanzine, but I have no access to a computer right now. I guess that counts me out."

I swear to God, at that moment, I wanted to destroy every existing copy of *Anti-Matter* available. So many people missed the point that it actually put me in a serious bout with depression. I had no intention to create a "slick" or "professional" magazine. How it looks and how it reads are two different animals but, ultimately, only one is important. My friend Jeremy told me about the time one of these glossy-covered "fanzines" approached his label for advertising. He asked them for a sample copy, but the editor insisted, "It's got a full color glossy cover!" He asked again, but the editor continued, "It looks really professional!" Finally Jeremy answered, "I don't care if looks like Spin! What the hell does it say?"

We started to talk about handwritten, Xeroxed fanzines like *Cometbus*, and even the old *Bullshit Monthly*. We marveled over how personality means so much more than PageMaker.

Lest there be any confusion, I am not anti-computer. I am the type of person who maps the progression and considers himself a fan of talented computer artist collectives like v23, Negativespace, Microdot, and OHIO-GIRLCO. But just like everyone else, I am also a critic—and a fairly picky one at that.

In his preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde wrote: "When critics disagree, the artist is in accord with himself. We can forgive a man for making a useful thing as long as he does not admire it. The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely. All art," he concludes, "is quite useless."



It's funny. I have been an art student now for three and a half years but I sort of freaked out when I found out this was going to be the "art and design" issue. When I first heard, I actually wasn't going to write anything at all but I figured shit, if you bought the art and design issue and are reading the columns you must be somewhat interested in art and/or what different people have to say about it.

When I first entered college, all I knew was that I loved photography and that I wanted to learn about it. Little did I know that after a year of foundation courses, we as students were expected to learn how to create art with content and not necessarily learn about photography. For many of my fellow classmates, this was their dream come true. For me it meant getting mediocre grades even though I excel technically and am way more determined and focused than many people in my classes, getting little to no time spent discussing my work during class or critiques, and that I was not at all encouraged creatively. Fortunately, I stopped caring what my professors thought sometime during my sophomore year. It just sort of cracks me up that we are taught to respect the work of photographers like Gary Winogrand and Larry Clark when someone like me who is doing similar work is virtually shunned in class.

Last year, one of my professors asked our class who considered her/himself to be an artist. Everyone except me and one other person raised their hands. Naturally he asked us why. I suppose there are several different definitions for the word artist, but when I hear it I tend to think of someone singularly obsessed and focused on her/his art. At any given time I probably would much rather be in the darkroom than anywhere else but it is not my life. I have many, many interests outside of art. I do not think about art 24 hours a day. I do not enjoy sitting around with people discussing my irrepressible need to create works of art. I imagine most artists do.

In a present day context, art has extremely snotty connotations for me. Much Postmodern art seems to be extremely personal with its message hidden beneath layers and layers of symbolism, abstraction, and (insert art term here). It seems that only artists with formal education can even begin to understand, much less appreciate, a lot of art that is being made today. I happen to like a lot of Postmodern art myself but can see how it turns a lot of people off. And I definitely do not choose that sort of avenue for my own work, nor do I want any of those connotations attached to my photos by calling myself an artist.

I suppose I am somewhat of a purist (or modernist) when it comes to photography. I print using full tonal ranges and very fine grain. I am extremely interested in form. But strangely enough, I have never put any of my photos behind glass and definitely could never picture them hanging up in a museum.

The only places I can envision my photos being displayed in any manner is in flyers, fanzines and records which is also somewhat strange because they usually are not reproduced very well. The only other places I think my photos belong is either in someone's hands or sitting on someone's desk or table. Being in the darkroom in itself is satisfying and infinitely pleasurable but I probably get just as much pleasure out of showing my photographs to somebody and that person asking if s/he can get a copy. That is where my motivation lies: to share my photos and be showered with compliments.*

An interesting question was posed in one of my classes last semester: How would you be different if you never made another piece of art again? The answer for me was that I would feel some sort of emptiness and frustration. I like to think that would be the case for anybody who doesn't have a form of creative outlet. Whether it be fixing bikes, playing an instrument, starting a business or making a sculpture, I think almost everybody needs to spend time being productive in some way, challenging their minds, creating something. I know a lot of people who occasionally draw or paint or take photos but aren't "artists." I like that. Firstly I like being around people that are creative and secondly I like knowing that there are a lot of people that don't give a shit what "art" is about and simply create because they want to. For some reason or another, I chose to do so in an academic setting thereby necessitating evaluation. I get B minuses in classes where I spent every ounce of energy I had, every minute I could working on my photo projects. This is why I don't call myself an artist — I don't fit in with the ideal notion of an artist nor do I want to. Then again, I don't fit in with the ideal notion of a punk either but I still consider myself a punk.

**this last part was just a joke in case you don't have a sense of humor*

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I made a big mistake by not including the Gauze LP in my top 5 of 1997. When are they touring the States again?!

Between the months of February and July I will be in England so if you write or have written to me during that time period please be patient. Also, please note that I have a new (and this time permanent) email address.



Examining the craftwork of hunter-gatherer cultures tells us a story. The sharpened arrowheads that were attached to spears showed us how our ancestors partly sustained themselves. An anthropologist, puzzled by an abnormal amount of upper body bone fractures in "prehistoric" humans, figured out the rest of the story. The bone breaks were similar to those found in one kind of modern human: rodeo cowboys. When a large animal is on the defensive, it turns and kicks. The anthropologist initially suspected the spears to be chunked. He then concluded from his

experiments — by creating his own arrowheads, attaching them to staves, throwing them, and finding the arrowheads to break on impact — that the spears were jabbed into the animal, not thrown. Thus we learn how our ancestors spent some of their time, which, if you stretch the importance of the hunter-gatherer diet enough, tells us why what modern humans eat is mostly out of synch with what the human body consumed for millions of years, as many nutritionists are now claiming. From arrowheads, cave writings, and bone fragments, we learn about our ancestors — and ourselves.

I see a critical importance in relearning this information. It is precisely the significance of this kind of information, how humans coexisted with their surroundings, and the stories they've left to tell us, that has been lost to our fairly modern culture.

When I was studying art as an academic subject, it left me feeling empty. I never knew why at the time. Mapplethorpe challenges social creed, Misrach exposes government abuse with skill and beauty, spoken word artists challenge norms, performance artists tell us more about ourselves than most care to know... you get the picture. Many people are blind to who we really are, so artists perform a valuable function in that regard. Problems arise when artists, especially in academia, are completely insular in their scene (very much like the punk scene in fact). Moreover, artists often create in abstract language perfectly unsuitable for the masses to digest or even to be interested in. So art as it's presented in art schools, academia, and in museums and galleries is often a self-serving medium despite its best intentions. Furthermore, art is often isolated from other disciplines. The instructors and their projects often cross over into, say, psychology, ecology, whatever, but in the student's interest, crossing disciplines isn't something that's explicitly taught because much time is instead spent learning the art's history, its forms and its techniques. As shown above, art and anthropology encounter common ground, but the meeting of disciplines is generally an afterthought. I felt the problem with studying art was in setting up these basis about what art is and in what context art should be created, studied, and viewed.

So I hold a loose definition of art. Art to me is any kind of creation or output that invokes a story or feeling. Art's function is to tell us about ourselves. If we accept that premise, at least as a primary function of art, then we can move further. The "What Is Art?" debates of academia are fairly pointless, energy wasting, and often referring to their being one right way to define and create art. There is no one right way for anything, period.

If it is assumed that sitting under bright lights sketching nude models for three credits is ART, then I'll point to people who have never done that, live tremendously interesting lives, and in the process tell us a lot more about ourselves than these students of art ever will. Art can be relayed by craft-making, sculpture, writing, playing music, talking, or simply living life. Most of us can define ourselves as artists. That doesn't mean we're good at what we doing. Nor does it mean we are saying anything new. The art I get the most out of is art that tells us something new about ourselves or approaches life in a way others haven't quite stated before. Art doesn't need to be pleasant; much art, in fact, is not. Art is a reflection of our culture and our culture reflects the art we create.

The message that comes to us time and again in modern expression, especially in pop-culture, is, simply: Our needs as humans aren't being met. Maybe reading Jean Liedloff's *The Continuum Concept* (and

Daniel Quinn's books) has prevented me from ever seeing things in the same way again. The art I spent much energy critiquing or creating was pretty much in line with everything else our culture produces. Similar to how our diet is born from fairly modern convention, modern art tends to represent in countless ways a constant grappling with an out-of-synch continuum.

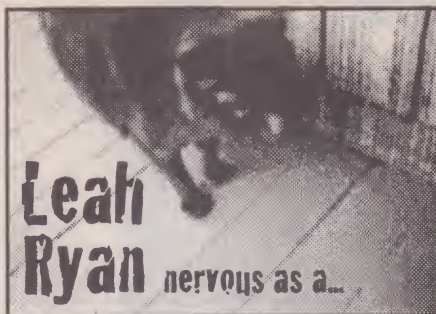
Liedloff's premise, that from the second we're born we are taken out of a continuum, people followed for millions of years. Our formative years are spent isolated from what Liedloff calls the "in-arms phase"; instead, we live in cribs (mini jails), sleep in separate settings from the parents, and we're constantly being coddled and looked after (or abused) instead of left to be who we as babies naturally need to be. Continuum babies, as found in stone-age cultures, are constantly held in the mother's arms. If the babies don't want to be, they're not, and they are free to roam as they please when indeed they can roam. They learn by adaptation, not force or scolding. Their actions are kept in check, not their whole sense of being.

Even though theories on the origins of statehood may contradict one another, humans very clearly separated themselves from a tried and true lifestyle continuum around 10,000 years ago. This happened on many levels: how we raised children, how we ate, how we viewed and acted within our surroundings, how we fundamentally lived, and so on. We have been reeling from the effects of this since, and we will continue to. Babies not born into this continuum — the people of our culture — often spend their lives ignorant of the continuum concept, and symptoms of being non-continuum are omnipresent.

One of my favorite bands, Superchunk, displays how its songwriters feel, and for that matter Superchunk manifests part of the general angst our culture has generated for itself. People who are actively creative and expressive tend to be highly sensitive to how we live, which is so often reflected in their work. Superchunk's themes include how "nothing grows up here," failed relationships, drunkenness, etc. Wailing guitars and deep, gloomy basslines are sentiments of sadness. The regimented plod of the rhythms is a metaphor for the regimented plodding our lives follow. It's no wonder bands like Superchunk appeal to so many. At one time or another, most of us experience intense emotional pain. Artistic expression just continues to document these kinds of feelings.

It's hard for me to consciously absorb art anymore when I don't find the message our culture sends to be inspiring. I appreciate and occasionally enjoy refined expression, but while I listen to the same bands over and over and read the more creative, entertaining and critical fanzines, I rarely feel as if I'm getting fresh insights to who we are as people or where we must go from here. Instead, I tend to receive affirmation of how I feel: dark and unhappy.

I recently observed the Dalai Lama's former assistant diligently working away at his mandala for peace. While I don't subscribe to the Buddhist philosophy — even though I agree with some of its principles — it wasn't hard to view and appreciate the level of artistic expression this Tibetan lama was creating, even though his message was also responding to the state of our culture. Art's potential is there, as it is a powerful enigma, so I don't give up on it altogether. Art reflects what we're experiencing, as it always has as a cultural medium, but as expression of our culture, art could stand a new vision to pursue. That's all.



I had the world's best homemade curtains in my childhood bedroom. They had a huge, simple geometric pattern; big brushstrokes; primary colors. Some of the brushstrokes are completely abstract; others seem to represent simple architectural shapes. A window, an easel, a face, a plant. There was also an occasional signature. Picasso. The pictures weren't cute little duckies or recognizable cartoon characters with matching action figures. The faces, in fact, don't even smile. I still have these curtains. I knew when I was about six years old that my favorite artist was Picasso. I recall glibly mentioning that fact to adults and getting a raised eyebrow or two. How could I possibly have a favorite artist at that age? Surely someone had told me to say that. Well, it wasn't just the curtains. I had a couple of books, too. Picasso is funny. He had a great sense of humor. Adults miss it because they get hung up thinking they should be serious because they're looking at art. But kids see it easily. They say that children can easily learn several languages at once, while adults have a lot of trouble adding more languages to their first. I would venture a guess that children who are exposed to art early on actually see things more clearly than adults do and are better prepared to handle complex artistic ideas later on in life. It isn't so much a question of whether kids are "precocious" or not. Are they given something tough challenging to chew on, or just mushy Barney crap that slides down easily and gets you ready for a nap? Even *Sesame Street*, comparatively, has some grit to it, and kids can grow into it. When I was too old for the basic lessons on that show, I learned a bunch of Spanish. I still remember most of it.

I was taken to New York to art museums. I had art books and art classes and art supplies. I was very lucky. Of course, not everything was hunky-dory. Me and my artistic little self eventually had a few problems with drugs, authority, etc. I dropped out at sixteen, which I don't regret at all. I read like a maniac, and I took a trip to Europe when I was about 20. I had some parental help, but most of the money for that trip was saved up from my lousy restaurant jobs. Don't ask me how I did it; I have no idea. I had no credit cards, either. But I got a Eurail pass and lots of youth discounts - this was the '80s. The dollar was still very strong. I went to so many art museums in Europe, I can't even remember what they all were. Really, all I did was go to art museums and drink. I wish I were kidding or exaggerating, but alas, I am not. I even went to a Picasso museum in the South of France.

A few years later, I got a GED and went to community college. I decided to take an art history course. I went in there trembling like a leaf - I had never written a paper or taken a test past the seventh or eighth grade; I was convinced I would flunk out. On the first day, the teacher gave us a form to fill out. We were to list our favorite artists and discuss any museums we had been to, etc. This community college was in an old New

England mill town. Imagine my teacher's surprise when I succinctly listed about fifteen art museums I had been to in Europe alone, plus the Met and the MOMA and the Whitney and the Frick in New York. I remember that he wrote something like "I think you've been to more museums than I have."

Knowing just a little bit about a lot of different kinds of art can be a very valuable thing. It's good to know about the role of art throughout history and the never-ending cycles of censorship. Once I had taken just one year of art history, I saw the world very differently. I can't waste time regretting the fact that I drank my way through Europe with no formal education, but let's just say that I really hope I get to go again. If I hadn't been introduced to art at such an early age, I don't know if I would have gone to Museums at all—maybe I wouldn't have even gone to Europe, but stayed in America at a bar where I always knew I could get another beer in my own language.

I have this argument about television all the time - it feels applicable to everything lately, so please forgive me if it seems irrelevant. For the most part, if I watch TV (and movies too sometimes), I have to put the writer part of my brain to sleep. Sometimes I have to bludgeon it within inches of its life. You can see why it might be easier to not watch TV. Anyway, the point I'm getting at here is that the writing sucks. I watch trashy talk shows that are unscripted and find them much more engaging. I actually enjoy soap operas a lot, too, which know what they are and usually don't try to be anything else. OK, Luke and Laura were out of hand but you get the picture. Anyway, my point: TV scripts suck. You always know exactly what's going to happen, to the point where you can predict the very words that will come out of a character's mouth. People are used to this, whether they know it or not. They naturally roll with whatever cliffhangers the show throws at them but they actually know exactly how everything will turn out. Some people say this is the way of the world, the masses really enjoy this predictable, one-dimensional cardboard crap. This is a convenient attitude called "blaming the audience." But then how do you explain the phenomena called *The Simpsons*? That show is hugely popular. It's also intelligent, humorous on many levels, and full of wide-reaching political commentary. I repeat: It's hugely popular. People love it. So what kind of a world would it be if all television was on the level of *The Simpsons*? Would people turn off the television? "Shhheeeiiiit, that's just too GOOD for me. What happened to *Suddenly Susan*?" I don't think so. I know I can usually be counted on for cynicism, but in this case I actually think American audiences can handle a lot more complexity than they're given. The real problem is that TV is, first and foremost, an advertising tool. But it's scary that we've come to believe that the average American really likes and deserves what the commercial media dishes out.

Back to art (and yes, TV has a lot of relevance here). If you're fortunate enough to grow up with some exposure to art, to experience it before you're old enough to be afraid of it, you will continue to seek it out. One of my favorite books, *Franny and Zooey* (by J.D. Salinger - if you haven't read it, read it. If you haven't read it recently, I recommend it highly as a reread) says a lot of really great stuff about art and ego. It also talks about reading to children when they're tiny babies; things that may or may not be way over their heads. Put a child in front of Picasso's *Three Musicians* and they'll probably think it's funny. I suspect that Pablo laughed and was rather amused when he painted it. A "trained" adult might surmise that the kid is laughing because he doesn't get it. I would argue that the kid laughs because does get it, and I think Picasso would be glad.

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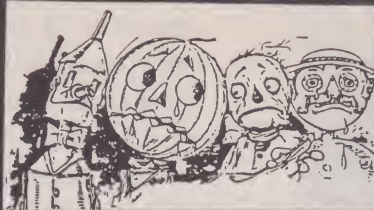


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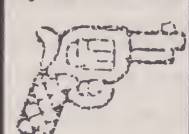


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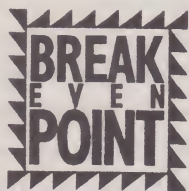
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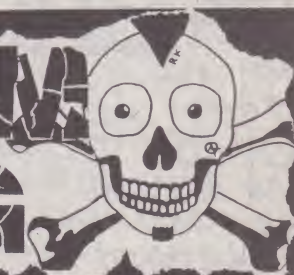


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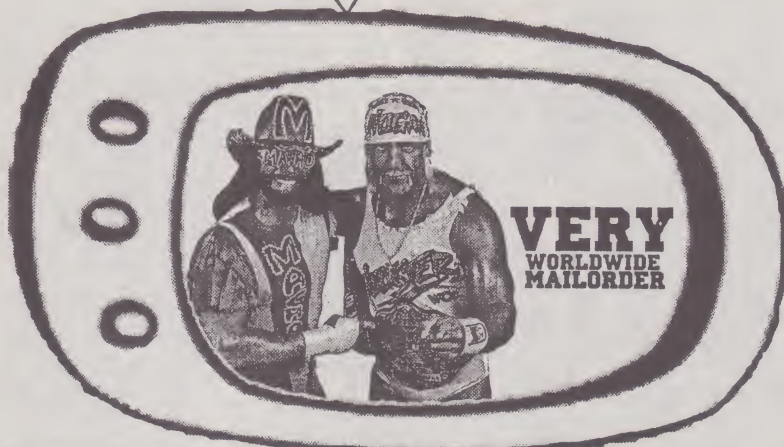
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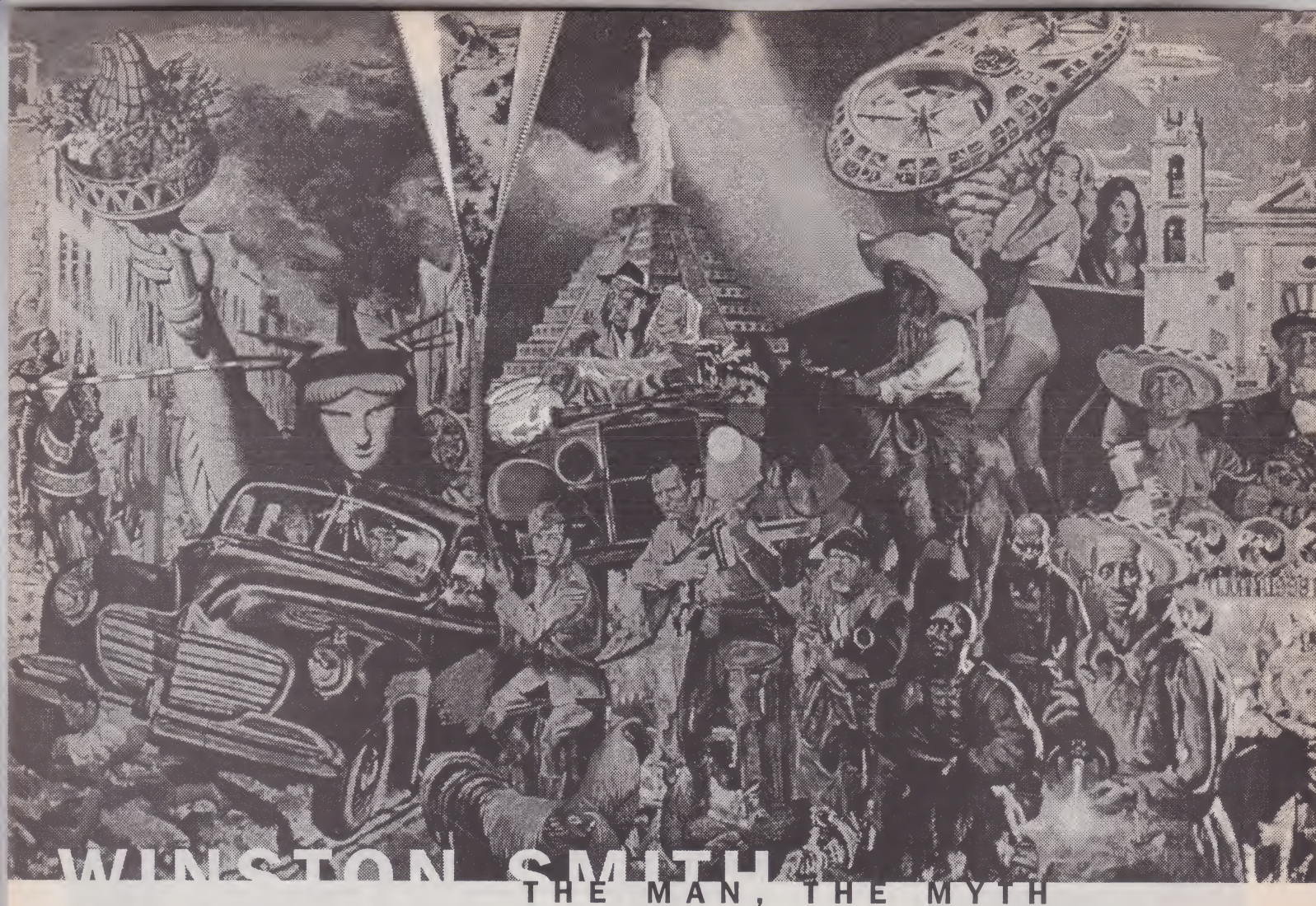
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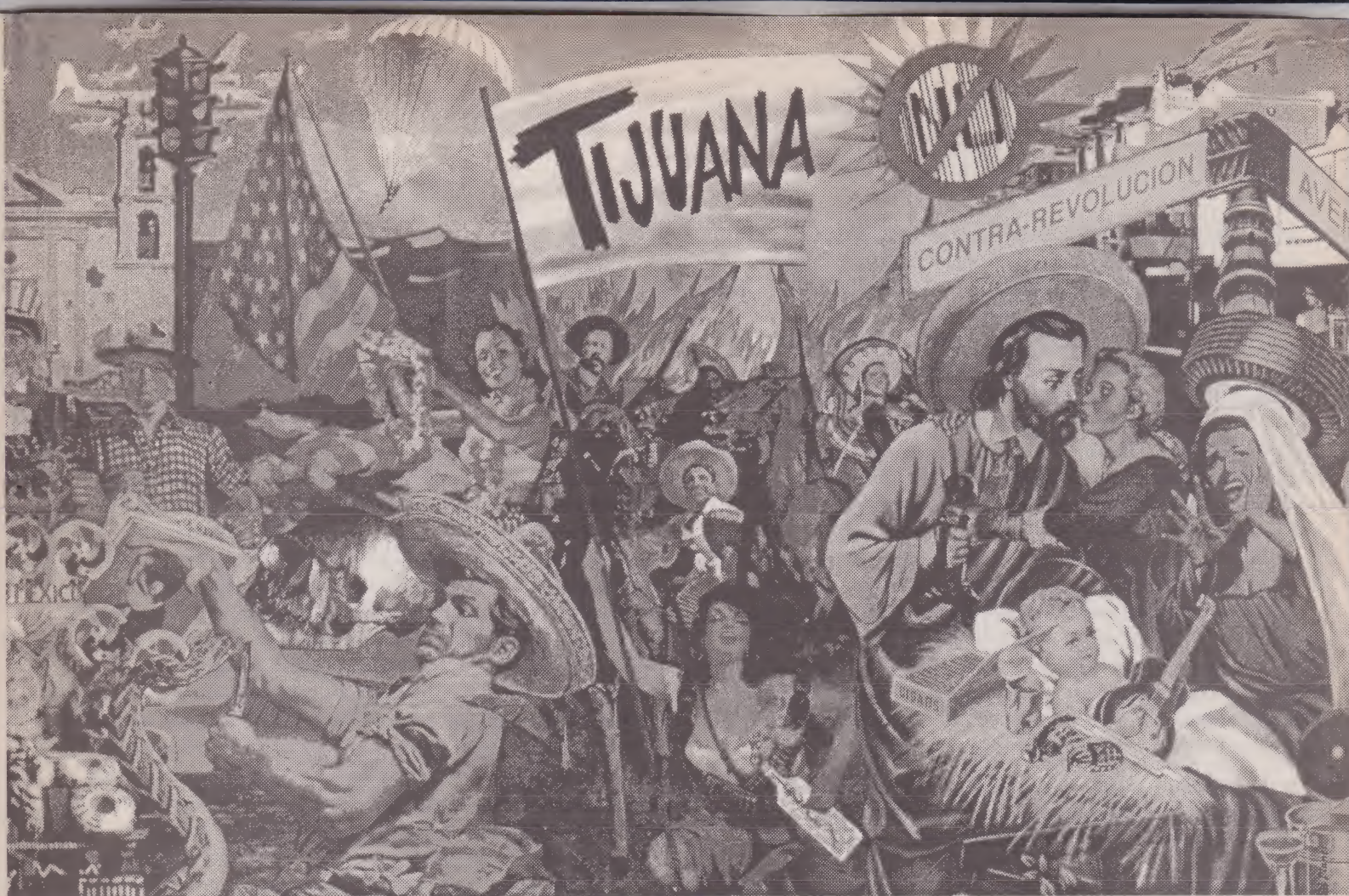


HOW the hell am I supposed to do this? Writing an introduction to Winston Smith is a futile task and one I am surely not skilled enough to pull off in a manner befitting the man and his work. Words only go so far, you know what I'm saying? And even the most skilled writer would have difficulty describing the impact and influence of Winston Smith's work. You're familiar with him. The man invented the Dead Kennedy's logo you drew on your notebooks in high school. He's responsible for all those eerie and enlightening montages you've seen a million times on numerous record covers like the DK's "In God We Trust," "Plastic Surgery Disasters" and even Green Day's "Insomniac." Working since the early '70s in relative obscurity and poverty, Smith is one of the world's foremost montage artists and history will no doubt show this... once he's dead. It was truly an honor to speak to him.

How did you get your start with montage?

When I was a wee lad I did cut out stuff but I didn't really start doing what I'm doing now until... I did a couple of different versions of it in the late '60s and then when I returned to the United States in the mid '70s when I was 25. During those years, I was mainly studying art in the academic sense at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, Italy—drawing and painting, stuff like that. That was my primary form of artistic expression. When I got back to the U.S., It had changed dramatically in just six or seven years, going from smashing the state radicalism to incipient yuppieism. People who were here all

that time saw the changes gradually and they weren't nearly as stunning. But by being absent for so long, it was like night and day. I started doing social commentary versions of collage based on my crankiness over this situation. In fact, at the time people used to say "you sound like some old coot" because I was saying that back in the old days things were better—but they *were* better. In the old days, people were rioting in the streets and when I got back, they were slumped out on television and basically concerned with the "me first" way of thinking which brought about the era of Ronald Reagan and unbridled greed. Maybe I was just jealous because I didn't make \$10 million on the stock market or something. I even told Biafra that after Reagan had served his second term and was unable to be president any longer that we were going to be unemployed soon. I told him we needed to vote to have him serve a third term. [Laughs] But we didn't know that we had Newt Gingrich headed our direction which is actually better. I guess probably, the style that I do now I started doing in 1975 or '76, but it's changed. I look at things I made in 1976 and '77 and it's a great deal different now. There was a lot of art being done for bands in the initial punk scene that were godawful. I thought I could do a little better than some of the posters I saw. I wasn't involved in the scene in any deep sense and didn't really know anybody in any bands, so I kind of just made up posters for bands that didn't exist and clubs that didn't exist. I put them all over the city and people would collect them and even show up at the address of the club which was a vacant lot someplace. I actually heard later from Dirk Dirksen, a long time afterwards, that he was always surprised that these bands didn't show up to get booked by him at the Mabuhay Gardens. The reason is that they didn't exist! Actually a lot of bands at that time existed only momentarily, came together for a couple of gigs and then vanished into thin air or remorphed



INTERVIEW BY JOSH HOOTEN

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into some other blend of band. So they went through a lot of names and it sounds like there were a lot more people than there actually were. It was really a small core of people playing musical chairs, or unmusical chairs.

Did your interest in music or politics happen first, or did one inform the other?

I'd definitely say the politics. It was much more the social movement. At that time, the late '70s and very early '80s, in San Francisco it was very much an art movement, sometimes much more than music. There were bands that were only marginally musically inclined and it was much more a performance trip. The music was kind of an excuse for all the art they were creating. The Tubes were that way, they were artists who happened to also be good musicians. The music was a way to get across their art ideas. In my case, it was almost like a resurrection of the Dada movement that took place in the early teens, prior to the first World War; it was actually an outgrowth of the political bullshit that was leading up to the first World War. They could very clearly see that that's where they were headed. It was an aggressive artistic protest which really hadn't happened before. Art had always been kind of the lapdog of whoever was in charge because they were the people paying for it. Giant statues and palaces and oil paintings of mythological critters and so forth—who else could afford it? Even Da Vinci was literally broke all his life, he died broke. He basically got funded by whoever was in power to make pretty pictures instead of all these really cool inventions that nobody cared about. He had to do all this other stuff to make a living. It would be like if you were this really incredible musician composing incredible scores, but all you could really earn a living at was making jingles for Cheerios, which actually happens. It must be frustrating for a lot of people. I would say it was mainly the art and

social/political angle that really got me into it. Music was secondary. I'm not very musically inclined, I can't play anything and I'm not nearly as touched or moved by music as I am by visual images. Art, film, theater—all the visual arts. I like music and punk rock music, when it came along, felt like something I had been waiting for all my life. I felt like this was finally it and I wished something like that was going on in the late '60s but it was all peace, love and brown rice and "ban the bomb" and earth shoes. Of course anybody who expressed an attitude like mine it was like, "Man, you really are a weirdo." I was ahead of my time I guess. I actually like punk a lot more when it's live. I'm not crazy about listening to it recorded. When it's live you get the energy of the whole scene.

How did your relationship with Biafra come about and what is that relationship like?

[Laughs] It continues to this day and it's very weird. A mutual friend of ours used to do artwork for a newspaper we made up for Rock Against Racism, a social movement that incorporated music and bands to help get their particular brand of propaganda out. It was mainly from England, but there was a chapter here in San Francisco. The friend of mine who I was working with kept looking at my artwork on the posters for the shows we were putting on and kept saying that I had to meet this friend of his because he said we thought exactly alike. It actually kind of scared me off because I thought he must be as crazy as I am—and sure enough he was! We ended up hitting it off straight away. He saw a piece that I did a couple of years prior to that and liked it. It was a three dimensional piece, but he had seen a photocopy of it. It was a cross made with dollar bills. To me it

seemed like a pretty obvious idea, not particularly shocking but a lot of people took it differently. He even said later in the intro to this book that he had to create a whole album just so he could feature this piece on the cover—that was kind of flattering. Biafra and I have a kind of partner-in-crime relationship. Kind of a “What can we do now that will really screw things up” relationship. He’s a bit of a prankster. He’s someone who I think generally has fun doing what he’s doing. I don’t think he would be interested if it were a heavy duty job type thing. It’s something that he does with all his heart and soul and determination. He’s definitely very single minded. When he needs to get something done, his powers of concentration are formidable. We only had to struggle a few times over things that were divergent points of view regarding how the art of a certain record should look. There were a few times when I would say it had to be done my way because it was my art and he would argue it had to be done his way because it was his music. I’ve had to compromise a couple of times and so has he, but the result has been visually very appropriate. It ended up just right for what it needed to be. We’re working together on a book right now that may come out on AK Press that will basically be Biafra’s spoken word rants in print with my illustrations. It should be out next summer, hopefully, if we get off our butts and finish it.

In the first book of your work, you described your stuff as “graphic wisecracks,” and I wanted to know about the role humor plays in your work. Do you think it makes the work more accessible?

Sometimes if you can make a point so that people can see the irony of something and relate it to their own lives, it becomes more important to them than some kind of very general and obscure, but equally as right on point. Humor seems to help because I have an irreverent sense of humor, irreverent sense of... I usually go too far with the joke. If anything can be done, it can be overdone is my point of view. [Laughs] Humor seems to help just because some of the issues that would inspire certain artwork are so bleak and so hopeless, you’ve gotta laugh so as not to cry. For example, we were at a rally yesterday against the proposed war in Iraq. Over a mil-

lion Iraqis have died over the last seven years because of the sanctions and half of them are children—300 or 400 children die everyday for completely needless reasons, just unclear water and not having antibiotics; they have totally curable diseases. That’s a crying shame. There’s almost no way to illustrate that as it really is that would not be so heavy that it would be hard to look at. It’s also hard to joke about stuff like that, but I think what I do is present a totally extreme, densely packed vision of what the subject is. You can’t be too subtle, especially with the American public. You’ve gotta hit people over the head. To make a point, you’ve almost got to really exaggerate just so they’ll sit up and listen. We live in a surreal time and age in our society. It’s no wonder people have dysfunctional families and relationships, our whole society is dysfunctional. I think of myself as a vivisectionist cutting up and dissecting these different strata of American life—especially the bullshit image that was presented throughout the biggest economic boom in America, the post-war period during the ’40s and ’50s. It was all “Come and buy a new car and a big house and a new radio and television set” and all this colorful plastic crap that was available to Americans then that wasn’t available to anyone else in the world because the rest of the world had been flattened. And all of that was exaggerated bullshit to begin with because people didn’t really live that way anymore than when you turn on the television today and you see happy people with nice clothes and big houses and happy kids—I don’t know anybody who lives like that. That’s just keeping up with the Jones’s and the Jones’s are only on television—they’re an invention.

“IF ANYTHING CAN BE DONE, IT CAN BE OVERDONE’ IS MY POINT OF VIEW.”

In the book, you mentioned that the reason your work looks insane is because that’s how the world is. To some people, your work may look like a ridiculous exaggeration but if they would look at the world around them, they’d see that

it’s not. The last issue of Punk Planet we had an interview with Lydia Lunch and she mentioned that some of her work was viewed as shocking but she said it’s only shocking because the world is shocking and she was only reflecting that world.

When I do certain things that are looked at as shocking or repulsive or whatever, I think it’s totally obvious. I think a lot of times it’s pretty subdued and not nearly as shocking as it could be. At the time I made the cross out of dollars I was talking about people making millions of dollars off of religion as well as the worship of money and essentially that money was our god. It wasn’t anything sacrilegious, it just had to do with the fact





that the true sacrilege is that we make money our god. I think people would look at the superficial interpretation and think the piece is awful. We used this one image for a Dead Kennedy's T-shirt design in England and it was of a woman holding a baby and she's feeding the baby with a bomb. I did that essentially because Reagan was busy closing down the school lunch programs for children, and for some of these kids, that was the only real meal they could depend on in the course of a day because they came from home conditions that didn't provide much beyond that. The savings on all these programs they shut down was sent to the Pentagon so it literally was them taking food out of the mouths of children and giving the money they saved to McDonall-Douglas or Teledyne or other giant corporations that produce F-15's and cruise missiles and Pershing Two missiles. To me, there was nothing exaggerated or terribly clever about it, it was just kind of stating how it was. But when I went to get a screen done for the T-shirt, the printer said he wouldn't print it. He said I was advocating making babies eat ammo. [Laughs] I started to explain, but I just said, "fuck it." People completely disregard the real meaning and hover on the superficial thing because it's much easier to dig than analyzing it any further; people get in a big huff over it. In England, they raided record stores over the giant posters of the cross made out of dollar bills; the cops would come in and shut the places down. There were one or two places in America where that happened, one was in Boston. It was a little spitwad record store that got raided and shut down because of that one thing. It did give us a lot of publicity, we should have sent the cops a check. [Laughs]

The funny thing about that particular piece, to me, is that if the devout religious people would take the time to find out what it really meant, at least part of what it meant, people cashing in on their belief systems, they'd probably be in support of the work.

The original name of that piece was "Idol." Biafra came up with the appropriate name for the record it appeared on, *In God We Trust, Inc.* That's a statement that carries several different meanings but it's really undeniable. You can't look around and think that isn't happening. I guess I wind up like a lot of artists and musicians in this movement: preaching to the converted. We're not going to change too many minds, although I've had a few people write me and tell me that I've really opened their eyes about certain things and conditions in the world—I guess that's good. We can all probably point to certain people in our youth that influence us in a certain way that we can either thank or blame for leading us down that road.

A lot of your work hinges on a clever recontextualizing of an image or images. I'm curious how that comes about.

That's always puzzled me. I'm not sure how to answer that because I'm not sure how it works. It's a weird process that I don't think I'm entirely in control of, and it kind of comes and goes. I can't really do work on demand like a trained seal or anything, although it would be really profitable for me if I could. It comes at a certain moment, and I have to pour over imagery over and over again—sometimes for years—before something pops out and other times you see something and in an instant you just go "Oh! I've got to put an anvil here, gotta put a balloon there," like it would completely change the meaning of the picture. Like if I put a chocolate cake in that gorilla's hand. [Laughs] I've shown things to



OPPOSITE PAGE: "TROUBLE IN PARADISE" 1995
THIS PAGE: "BUY OR DIE" 1991



people that I thought were goofy pictures because they were fun to take the dignity of a certain personage or scene and spoil it by messing with it and they'll be like, "Oh wow, that's really heavy," and they'll start to explain to me what it really means, things that never occurred to me before, and sometimes they'll even give me the title of the piece because they'll see something in it. I think that happens in all art—people see their own life experience in it. That's why some things will mean something very deeply to certain people and to other people it won't mean anything. If they looked at it for 100 years, it still wouldn't mean anything to them. A lot of it is really in the eye of the beholder.

You use a lot of recognizable images and icons that are so deeply ingrained in the collective unconscious like bombs and certain figures and the generic middle-to-upper class white male and family. Some of those things may mean very different things to people, but they definitely mean nothing to very few people. I think your method of creating imagery lends itself to being read differently. That's different than a lot of art which, I think, gets a little too vague and veiled in hidden meanings and metaphors so that it really doesn't communicate anything at all.

I try to make things accessible for people because if I'm trying to communicate, I can only do that in a language that they will understand. It's really funny, I'm not very plugged into modern art and I don't know many other artists but people are always asking me if I know the work of other people and I don't. I guess I'm pretty absorbed in my own little trip and not really exposed on a social level to other artists. But every now and then I'll open one of those magazines like *Art in America* or some other big time gallery magazine and I'll see photographs of rooms with little piles of sand in them with a string running from one end to the other or a pile of twigs. I don't know, call me old fashioned, but I can't scope that at all! It's so obscure. But some people pee their pants over this stuff and I wonder what I'm doing wrong. Maybe I should do some bullshit installation like that and people will just start offering me money. Sometimes I just scratch my head and wonder why, if they're really trying to say something, don't they just come right out and say it?



When I was in art school, I produced a fair amount of work that was influenced by punk records and definitely by your stuff; work that didn't require a reading list for you to figure out what the meaning was. But there were so many people in art school who were wrapped up in being vague for the sake of being vague that my friends and I, when we would see this kind of work, would just attribute it jokingly to the artist, "working out their inner struggle."

Yeah, and you want to just tell them to keep it to themselves. [Laughs] Sometimes I wonder, and I'm perhaps over simplifying it, but it seems to me like the Emperor's New Clothes. Not that my ideas are earth shattering or anything your normal person with an average intelligence can't grasp, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to get it, but that's kind of where I'm aiming at. Those are the people that need to be touched by art. If I ever wanted to get work in a gallery, which



"I THINK THAT HAPPENS IN ALL ART—PEOPLE SEE THEIR OWN LIFE EXPERIENCE IN IT. THAT'S WHY SOME THINGS WILL MEAN SOMETHING VERY DEEPLY TO CERTAIN PEOPLE AND TO OTHER PEOPLE IT WON'T MEAN ANYTHING."

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP: "ON THE THRESHOLD OF A DREAM" 1988
 OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM: "DINNER IS SERVED" 1989
 THIS PAGE: "HARVEST TIME FOR THE ARMS BUILDERS (MONEY TREE)" 1983



"MY PROBLEM IS THAT I CAN'T DO LESS THAN WHAT I DO. IF IT'S FOR GREEN DAY OR SOME OTHER GIANT BAND, OR IBM, GOD FORBID, OR FOR SOMEBODY WHO HAS A BICYCLE REPAIR SHOP IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, I DO THE SAME WORK FOR EITHER ONE BECAUSE I CAN'T NOT DO WHAT I DO TO ITS FULLEST EXTENT"

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP: "IDOL" COVER OF THE DEAD KENNEDY'S "IN GOD WE TRUST INC." 1979
 OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM: PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AND HIS MASTER
 THIS PAGE: "GOD TOLD ME TO SKIN YOU ALIVE" COVER OF GREEN DAY'S "INSOMNIAC" 1995

isn't something I'm prone to work for or put much energy into, but if that's what your goal is, it seems to me the worst thing you can do when you walk into a gallery is to be an artist—or a living artist. A friend of mine and I were planning on doing a little art scam. We were going to invent an artist who did really obscure stuff, take some slides and send them to a friend of ours in Italy and have him mail them back from Rome or someplace to some gallery and see if the guy could get accepted into the gallery as an international star and since his work is so obscure it must have a very heavy meaning, and his prices could be unbelievably high. So we'd create this false resumé for him and then he'd get killed in a tragic automobile accident, pushing the prices of his work even higher because he was dead! Being dead is a really good career move, Elvis would tell you that.

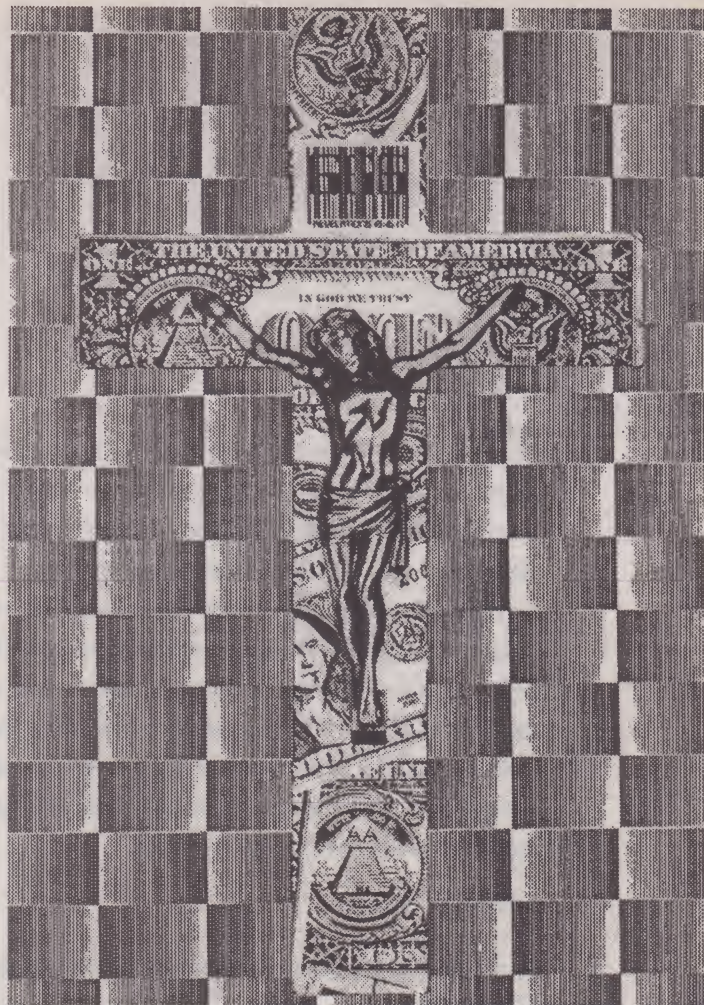
It seems to me that the high art world requires a level of vagueness or a lack of content to get successful. It seems important that these artists aren't saying very much and aren't communicating very much. I was wondering if, with your work being very thick with meaning, you're making yourself inaccessible to the high art world. Is it ever tempting to dumb down what you were doing in order to gain a larger audience?

In a half joking way, I've thought about it in the same way I've thought about creating this fake artist and then having him knocked off but it's never gone any further than that. My problem is that I can't do less than what I do. If it's for Green Day or some other giant band, or IBM, god forbid, or for somebody who has a bicycle repair shop in the neighborhood, I do the same work for either one because I can't not do what I do to its fullest extent. I throw myself into whatever I'm doing, which can be exhausting when you use up all your energy on little things and don't have anything left for anything else. ©

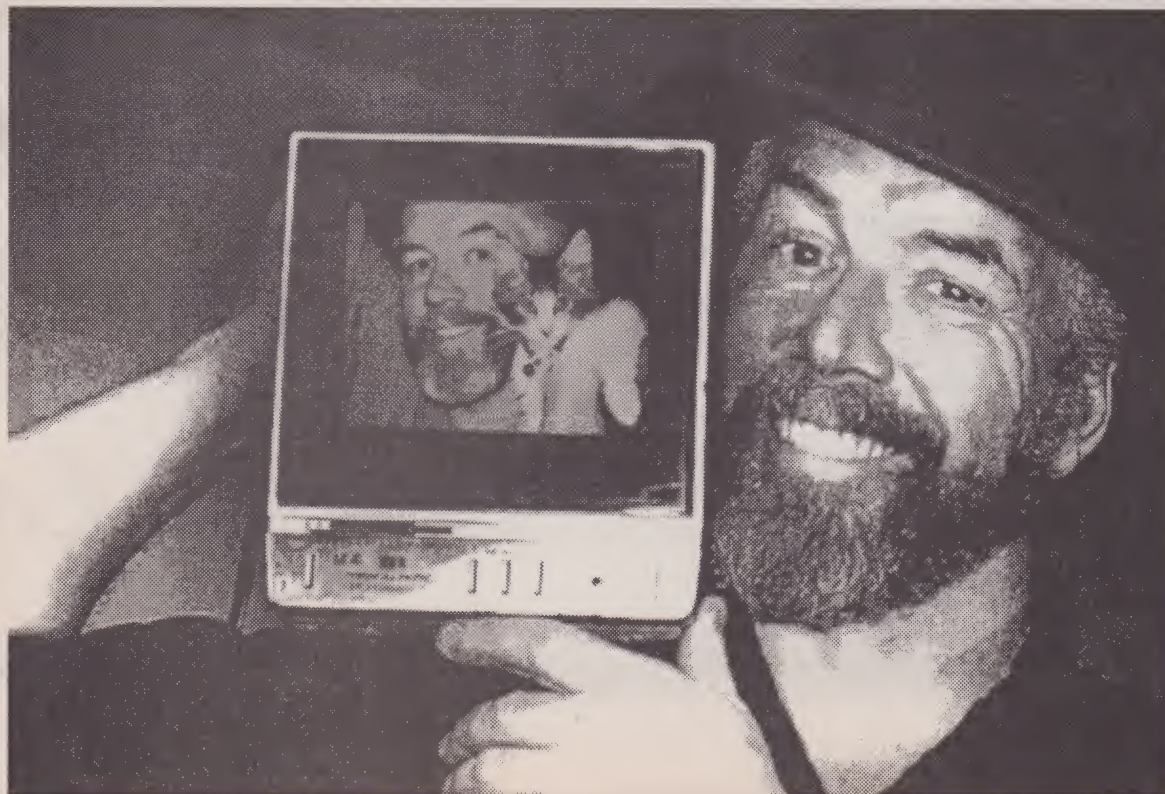
Check out more of Smith's work at www.winstonsmith.com.

Also call 1-800-848-4277 to order either of Smith's two books, "Act Like Nothing's Wrong" and "Been Wrong So Long It Looks Like Right To Me."

Do it now.



Punk 97 Planet



New York based photographer Chrissy Piper has been documenting the punk scene for some time now, a process that culminated in her book *The Unheard Music* (P.A. Kane Publishing) that was released last year. A landmark accomplishment Piper's book forced people to look at punk/hardcore in the context of real art as opposed to strictly an underground, obscure phenomenon. The importance of her book is right up there with Cynthia Connolly's *Banned In DC* as far as living documents of an underground music scene. Not content to merely shoot band photos, Piper is concentrating more on different types of subject matter these days, subject matter represented in the work shown here.

Interview by Josh Hooten

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO PHOTOGRAPHY OVER PAINTING OR SOME OTHER MEDIUM?

When I was in high school, our qualifications were either art or language. I had taken a few art classes and in photography, the teacher was really cool to me—he made me send photos to bands and stuff. I just stuck with it, instead of drawing or something else.

CHRISSY PIPER

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY YOUR "QUALIFICATIONS?"

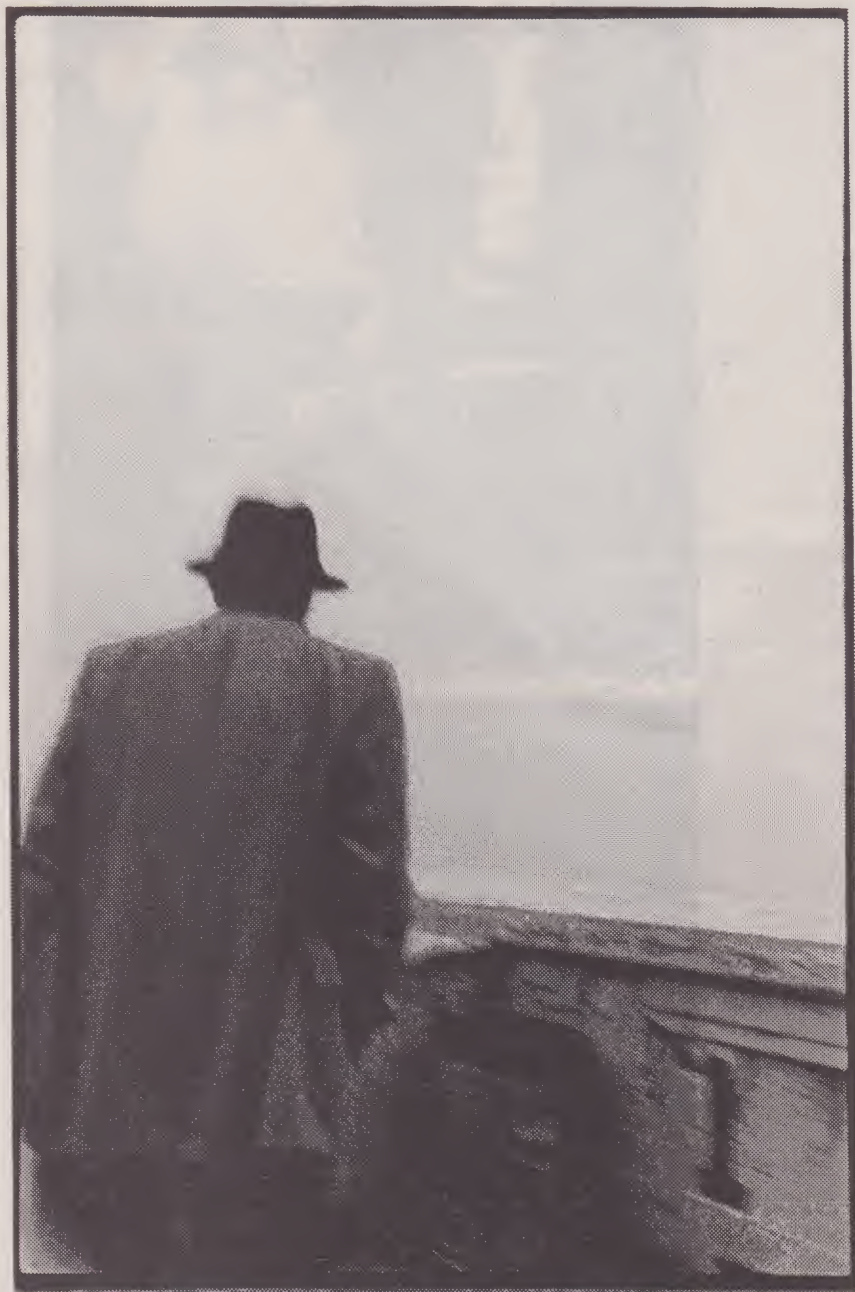
In the high schools in California you had to take three semesters of a language or three semesters of art to graduate. I took art.

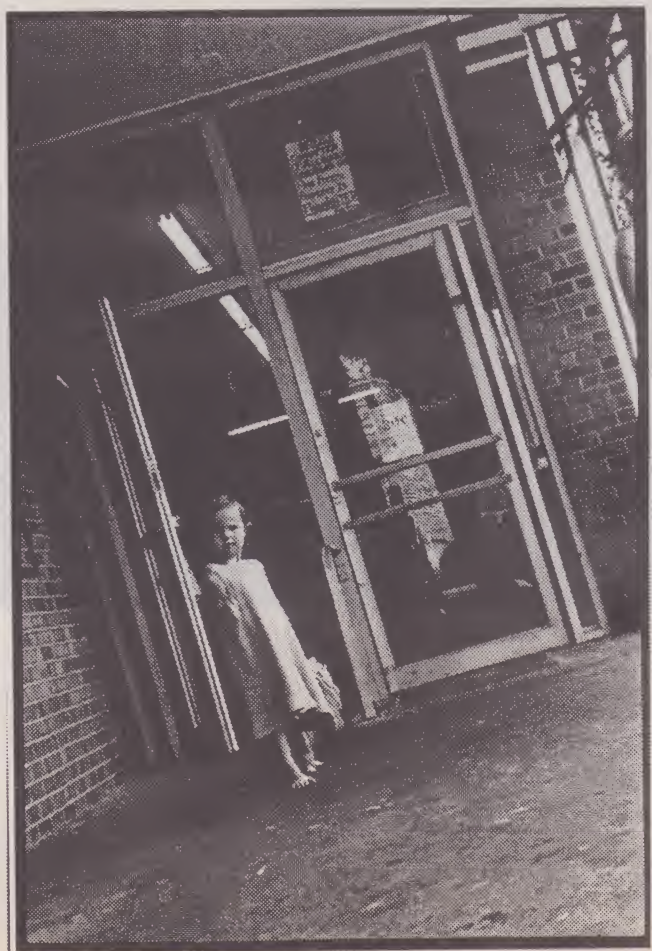
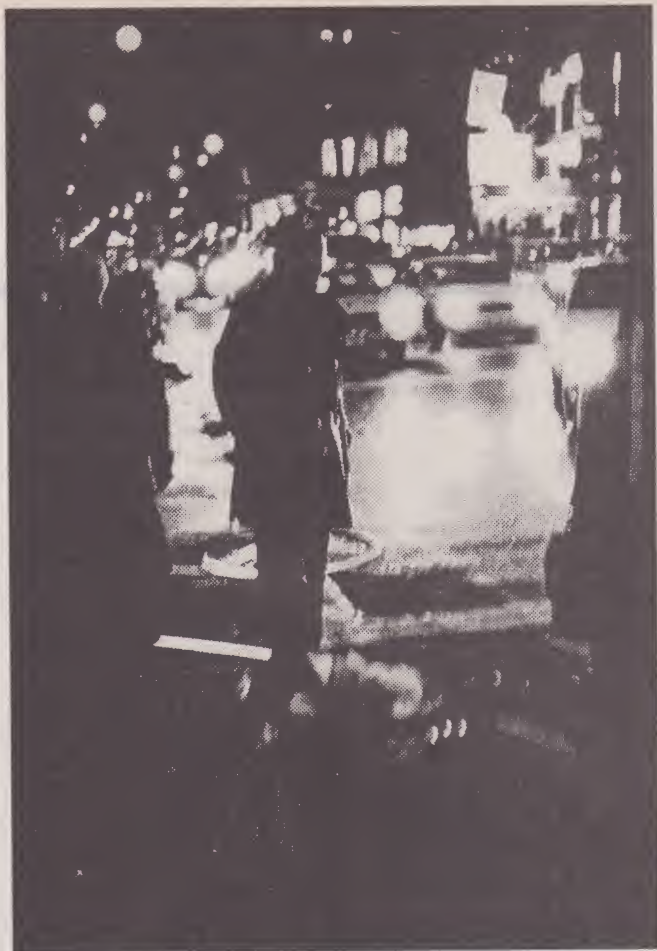
DID YOU START OUT SHOOTING BANDS AND MOVE INTO OTHER STUFF, OR VICE VERSA?

In high school, I was friends with this band The Monster Club—they became Still Life—and I just took pictures of them at a show once. Then we did a zine and we needed photos for that, so I just kept doing band photos. When I got into college, I started learning about different photographers and kinds of photography and that's when I started doing street stuff.

DO YOU PREFER ONE OVER THE OTHER AT THIS POINT?

Actually, I like doing street and documentary photography over band stuff only because I'm really tired of looking at band pictures. They're just... I don't know, I'm just tired of them. Anyone can do band photography, you just have to know how to use a camera and stand up front. There's one thing to doing band photography and once people learn it, anybody can do it.







CHRISSY PIPER



CHRISSY PIPER



LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR BOOK. IN GENERAL, HOW WAS IT RECEIVED?

I've only seen like four reviews and I've only gotten about six letters, but I hear things from bands that take the book on tour with them and they say people are really into it. Paul Drake has really been doing a lot for me with that and he says people really like the book. My roommate was just in Europe with his band and he said a lot of people had it there. The reviews have been good. There's been a couple that have been kind of weird but that's to be expected—it's kind of a new thing.

IN READING REVIEWS OF THE BOOK, WHAT CRITICISMS OF YOUR WORK DO YOU THINK ARE VALID AND WHAT CRITICISMS DO YOU THINK COMPLETELY MISS THE POINT?

I know there was some criticism that some of the photos were just typical band pictures, and I totally agree with that. When I get criticized for some of the band photos I took in high school, I'm fine with that. I understand that. I really like that people appreciated the portraits. That meant a lot to me because that's the kind of photography I really like to do. Overall, it's gotten a pretty good reception. The thing that bothered me was some people didn't like the layout. There's this company in Germany who won't carry the book because there's only one picture to a page. It's like people were expecting it to be *Banned In D.C.* or something, but they're two very separate things. That really bummed me out because I really like the way it's laid out—it's really simple and clean.

I THINK THE WAY IT'S LAID OUT MAKES YOU PAY ATTENTION MORE TO THE PHOTOS THAN YOU WOULD IF IT WAS PACKED WITH STUFF, SO YOU ACTUALLY GET MORE OUT OF IT THAN YOU WOULD IF IT WAS REALLY BUSY.

It has a zine quality to it, but I wanted it to be more about the pictures than I did about busy work. I didn't want to put band logos in it—it's a photo book, you know?

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO WITH YOUR WORK? IS THIS SOMETHING YOU WANT TO PURSUE AS A PROFESSION OR IS IT SOMETHING YOU WANT TO KEEP AT THE LEVEL OF A HOBBY OR INTEREST? WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

I get asked that every day because I work at a studio. What I really want to do is magazine work but that takes a while and it sucks because in photography, it's very much who you know. But essentially, that's what I want to do, whether it's shooting a person for whatever reason, or going to a certain place and documenting it. But that's really unrealistic to just decide that's what I want to do. Basically, you have to get yourself known. You have to do something to get people's attention. I'm not one of those people who's in a rush to get successful. Photography is what I do. There's this photographer I know, he's 74 years old, and we were talking about this one woman photographer whose work totally sucks but she knows all the right people so she gets shows at the MOMA and all that and my friend was telling me when he did photography that's what he did, and he had to do it, but now people see that you can make money off of photography and that's why they do it. So I try and live by the idea that photography is what I like, it's what I do, rather than, "I've got to make money." I get shit for it from people who ask me how I think I'm going to be a photographer. It's like, "I don't have to be a photographer. I have a job that brings in money for me, I just do photography." Hopefully one day it will pay off, but I'm not in a big rush. A lot of the kids I know that do art have jobs to get money to do their art and if the two don't go together, that's OK. If you put enough time into it, eventually it will pay off. There's so many half-assed people who expect to get everything handed to them. It sucks because those are the people that get recognized, but they're also the people you don't hear about for long. ©

SETH

TOBOCMAN

Comics went through a transformation in the 1980s. Previously thought of as a distraction for kids, a handful of authors and artists proved that it was anything but. The stories were complex, and the ideas expressed within them heavy. Much of the press and excitement of this period focused around a triumvirate of authors consisting of Alan Moore (*The Watchmen*) Frank Miller (*The Dark Night Returns*) and Neil Gaiman (*The Sandman*). They were lauded as the saviors of comics. But before all of them was Seth Tobocman.

Tobocman, along with his partner in crime Peter Cooper, created *World War 3 Illustrated* in 1980. *WW3* did what few other comic books had ever attempted before: it took politics—and comics—seriously. Within *WW3*'s pages were the illustrated stories of struggle, hope and dissent. Within these pages, Tobocman's work stood out; his crude black-and-white comics looked like they had been created by the hand of a desperate man. And in a way, he was desperate; desperate to find meaning during a time when everything seemed to be going wrong.

Tobocman soon found the that meaning in the anarchist squatting movement of the Lower East Side. Once involved with the squatters, Tobocman's unique style came to virtually define the movement visually during the '80s.

Tobocman's recent work is less simplistic than his older drawings. Instead of going for sheer visceral impact, as the work chronicled in his book, *You Don't Have to Fuck People Over to Survive* did, Tobocman is focusing on telling a story. The world is not as black and white as Tobocman's drawings make them appear, and his new work acknowledges that fact.

This new approach culminated in the graphic novel *War in the Neighborhood*, to be published this spring after more than five years of work. It is a complex work, filled with the ambiguities and contradictions inherent in modern life. It is also, like his earlier work, a story of struggle, hope and dissent.

Interview by Dan Sinker

Five pages from *War In The Neighborhood* are reprinted following this interview.

How long have you been doing your work for?

I've been doing my work since I was seven. Are you talking about in terms of publishing, political work, comics...

In terms of the point where you realized, "Wow, this is what I want to do. This is how I want to spend my time. This is how I want to communicate my message."

I would say that I was aware of feeling that this was my strong suit since I was in first grade. When you're a kid, you very quickly realize that there are some things that you're not good at and some things that you are good at and I found that I was not good at anything but drawing. So I immediately said, "Well, that's one thing." Also, being into comic books and being exposed to comic fandom, I was aware that there were these people who signed their names to comic books and that they did that for a living and I was like, "Wow, that's for me." But when I got older, I got deflected from that for a while and I didn't get back to it until really about 1979/1980 which was when Peter Kuper and I put out the first issue of *World War 3 Illustrated*. It was a comic book response to the Iran crisis and to the so-called "hostage drama" and to people walking around with "Fuck Iran" buttons and this gingoistic atmosphere. From that point on, I was propelled in the direction of trying to get stuff out and doing it from a fairly

radical perspective as much as I could. I've been working in those venues since about 1980, all through the '80s and now well into the '90s.

At what point before the first WW3 came out—between first grade and then—did you begin to politicize your art?

That's a very complex question. I was always aware of something called politics—although I didn't necessarily have very good information about it—in the sense that my uncle had been in the Communist party in the 1950s and a lot of my family had reacted against that because they had been stigmatized simply for being related to the poor guy and that had hurt them in their attempts at upward mobility and attaining the American dream and all of the stuff that Eastern European Jews wanted to get in their generation. I was very aware of politics as something to stay away from. But nonetheless, I was aware of it. My father supported the VietNam war, that's as far as he'd gone from the politics his family had held. I was also aware of politics as subject material because comic books in the '60s and '70s were full of political references—not very well articulated or intelligent ones, but they were there.

You're talking about underground comics, right?

No, I'm talking about straight comics. All mass media was politicized in the '60s. You're forgetting what it was like. Everyone was on that bandwagon, even in a superficial way. I mean Denny O'Neil's Green Lantern/Green Arrow—not that I'm proud of having read it—had a big affect on me. But also underground comics had a big effect of me. I was aware of Robert Crumb—you couldn't *not* be aware of Robert Crumb. Spain Rodriquez's *Trash Man Aget of the 5th International* blew my mind. But the '70s was kind of a strange time in that at about the age that I was becoming a teenager, everybody was starting to depoliticize and move to the right. I remember seeing a TV show with all of the Yippie leaders, Ruben, Hoffman, Renny Davis, the only one who seemed to have not sold out was Hoffman who was sitting there in military fatigues and everything he said was bleeped out—that's always stuck in my mind. But I didn't really become politically active until the '80s and the emergence of Reagan and the emergence of this right-wing tendency that I felt called for a response. I was into punk in the '70s when I was a teenager and that was political in its own way in that it was non-conformist. But that has a lot of different elements—being nonconformist can be being very right-wing in certain ways too. In the '80s, I became very involved in political activity. But I have to say that when we started *WW3*, our politics were very vague. It wasn't until the third or fourth issue of *WW3* that I really feel I got my feet on the ground as far as what I was actually concerned about. That really came out of living on the Lower East Side; out of dealing with being part of a tenants union and fighting with the landlord; dealing with drug dealing on the corner; and doing an art school for local kids where I got to see what they were going through. It was then that I got what I would say were some real politics, beyond that sort of broad, symbolic politics like being against to the invasion in Granada.

What's really interesting to me is that you were able to find a group of people, let alone a group of artists, that not only shared similar outlooks and politics, but also didn't look down on the comic medium.

The fact is that fine artists, as opposed to art teachers or art critics, at that time had enormous respect for comics. There wasn't a real problem finding fine artists who wanted to experiment with comics and I think that's helped expand comics. A lot of people made the crossover thanks to *WW3*. That was also a point in time where comics were just starting to come out of the closet here in the States. *WW3*'s first issue predated the first issue of *Raw* by about a month—we actually shared staplers with Art Spiegelman—although we all knew that *Raw* was coming out a year before it came out because he had amazing advanced publicity. It was in the air that something was going to happen with comics. Kuper and I both wanted to work at *Heavy Metal*, it was the only real venue at that time for adult comics in the states. I had gone to the West Coast and tried to sell stuff to the underground comics, but they were all in a very conservative mode for economic reasons. They wanted stuff that looked like the Freak Brothers and they told me that. I asked them "What's the difference between someone saying 'I want the Freak Brothers' and someone saying 'I want Superman.'" They'd found an automatic button that you could press and money would fall out of the machine—of course they're gonna press that. And we found out that *Heavy Metal* at one point they had graphed the relationship of sales to bust size on the cover. This was how they were thinking. They'd inherited this French comic and it was selling, but they didn't really know why Americans were buying it, so the only thing they could quantify was the sexual content. Even though the French stuff in *Heavy Metal* was very exciting, the stuff they were paying American guys to do in '79 was not the quality material that was coming from Europe. That was another thing that compelled us to do *WW3*: To allow an intelligent venue for more alternative stuff.

From someone who wasn't involved in it, from someone who only read it, it always seemed that the politics was as important as the art...

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE FUNCTION OF ARTISTS TO TURN SUFFERING AND STRUGGLE INTO SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL TO DERIVE MEANING FROM EXPERIENCE.

The politics *were* important. The politics were from our hearts. But we were really flying by the seat of our pants as far as an analysis goes. It took me some time before I knew what I thought about certain things.

Now let's flash forward 18 years to now, when you are still working on *WW3*, albeit less frequently. How do you see its relationship to what it was? How much has what you initially set out to do changed, or do you think that you've stayed pretty close to your initial purpose, which was art and politics?

It's still art and politics, but I think it's changed a great deal because my conception of what politics was and what art was has deepened a lot. I've been exposed to a lot more real political activity and I think that the strongest thing *WW3* has to recommend itself is in the form of its audience. It's a small audience, but it's an audience of really exceptional people. I talk to people all the time who have been really deeply affected by the magazine and they're doing really interesting things which have some relationship to the fact that they read the magazine. I'm not saying that I made them do it, but that there's some relationship to the fact that they read this magazine and that they're building a waterline for the Zapatistas,

or they're going to check on human rights abuses in Iraq, or they're squatting on the Lower East Side, or they're putting out a fanzine or they're in a band or whatever they're doing. While it's a small audience, it's a very precious or special audience in that sense. I think that our connection to a community of people like that, to me, is what the magazine is about now. I would have to qualify that by saying that the magazine is very pluralistic—there are a lot of other people who work on the magazine who have a completely different opinion than I do.

So let's talk about you. Are you doing your art as your sole way of getting by?

I'm trying to. I've always been trying to and it's always been a struggle. Over the years I've done some really not very exciting jobs to get by. There have been times in my life when I'm self supported. There have been times in my life when I hit up my relatives. There have been times in my life when I've been living on nothing. There have been times in my life where I've gotten deals from Warner Brothers Records and the *New York Times* and *Heavy Metal* and the money from some of that stuff, particularly the comics stuff, is very good when you can get it. It's a gambler's life. I believe that I am best suited to get by on my artwork. If I was an employer, I wouldn't hire Seth Tobocman to do much besides his artwork. Looking at it from that point of view, I am most efficiently employed drawing pictures. That has always been true since I was in first grade. It was a very clear thing to me at a very early age that there ain't nothing else I should be doing. I'm trying to do that. I do some work for the *Times*; hopefully I'll get some decent work from the new book I'm doing; hopefully I'll get more work at the *Times*. It's definitely a gambler's life.

Is it ironic that the *Times*, which prompted you to really start living the life you're living now in your reaction to its coverage of Iran...

Actually, it was my reaction against the *Post*. The *Times* was at least readable. Is it ironic that I work for the *New York Times*? That's an interesting question. The *Times* has been a real struggle for me over the years. At one point in time I was working for the *Times* doing op-ed illustrations twice a week. Sometimes there would be an article that would have a point of view that I couldn't really deal with illustrating. Sometimes I would do it but other times I wouldn't. I got a fair amount of respect for occasionally refusing an article because nobody does that. In illustration, you never turn down work. It's a difficult thing; I'm not gonna say that I'll never illustrate an article that I don't believe in because sometimes you got to. But on the other hand, there's still right-wing people who say that the *New York Times* is the devil. For instance, I illustrated an article in the *Times* by Luc Sante defending the squatters who were being evicted on 13th street. What better thing could you want to illustrate than an article by Luc Sante? I would say that even in the best of circumstances, you don't have full free expression in a place like the *Times*. Even in the best of circumstances, they're going to go into your artwork and say "There's too much cleavage showing on this figure." This is what they do, and that's illustration. I make a separation between my illustration and the work that I publish myself. There

have been times at the Times where they've been uncomfortable that they were hiring me. For instance, years and years ago I illustrated a series of stickers about Bernard Goetz. They were a series of stickers that said, basically, that he should have been more thoroughly prosecuted. Goetz, if you remember, had shot three black teenagers on the subway and claimed it was self defense; he became a hero to the right wing. They were put up on the subways. The people who were printing them were a black nationalist group who had a lot of legal problems, so they kind of didn't want it to be known that they were doing this. Early one morning, they rang my doorbell and said, "We're at the printer with the stickers and we want to know if we can put your name on them." I hadn't had my cup of coffee yet and so I was like "Uh... sure," and went back to sleep. Next thing I know, the sticker is out all over the Subway with my name on it! Somebody sent a letter into the *Times* saying that these stickers were "inflaming racial hatred in New York City," and my editor wanted to know what the situation was. It's a sticky thing working in the mainstream media and working in the alternative media at the same time.

You said earlier that you separate your illustration work from your own work. Speaking souly about your own personal work, how has your approach to it changed over the years.

Enormously. How far back should I go?

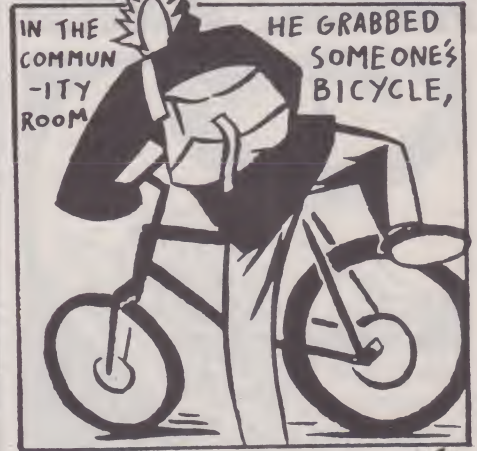
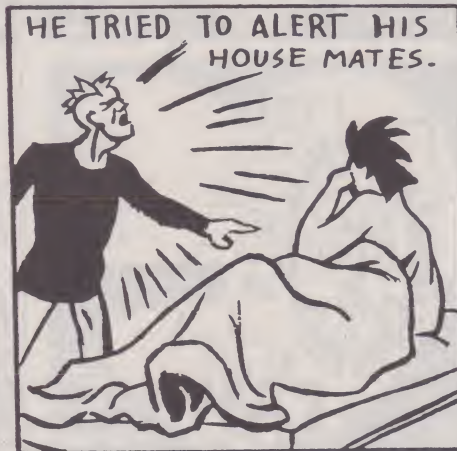
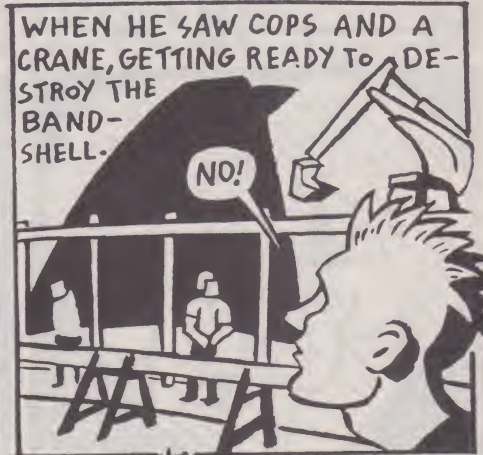
As far back as you want. We're talking about your work now in comparison to your work in your past.

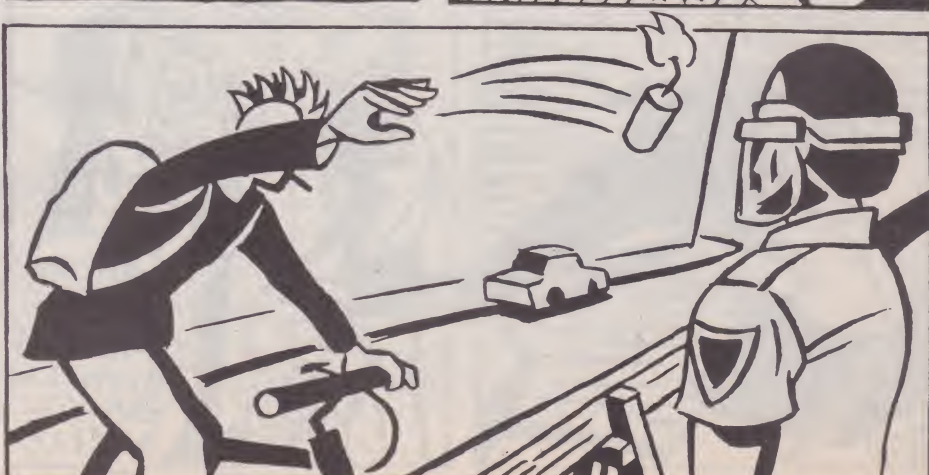
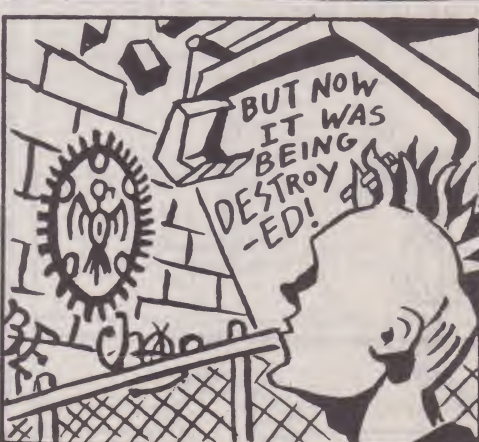
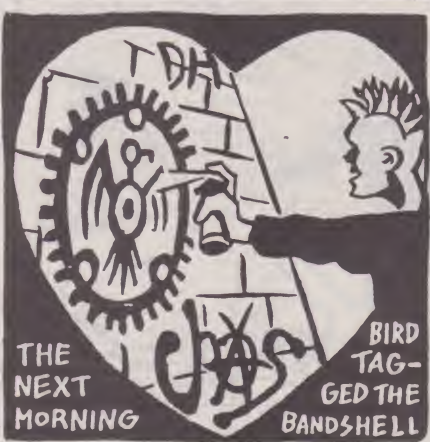
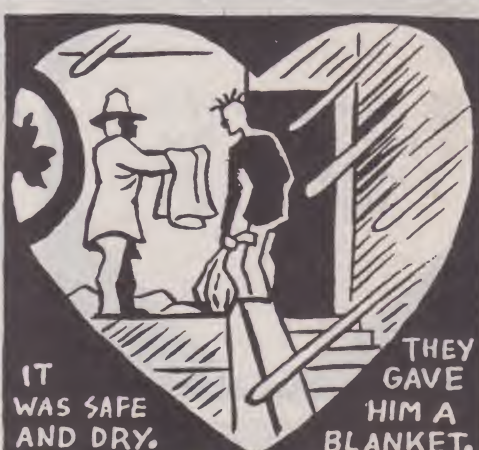
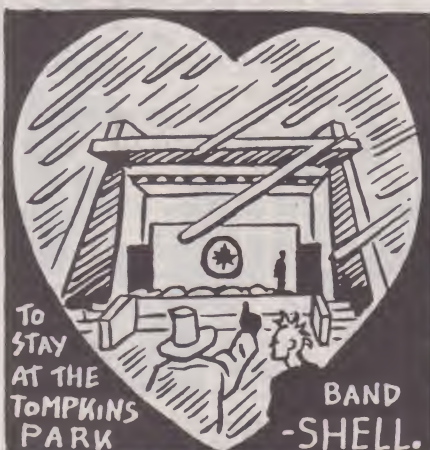
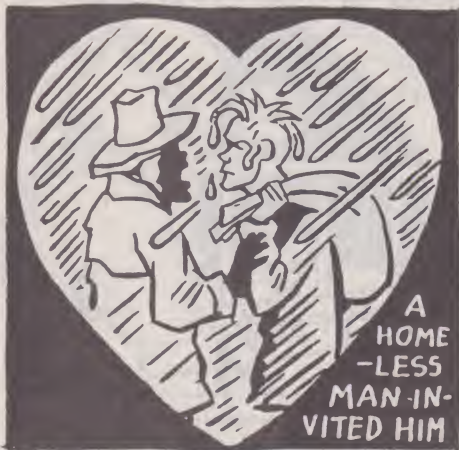
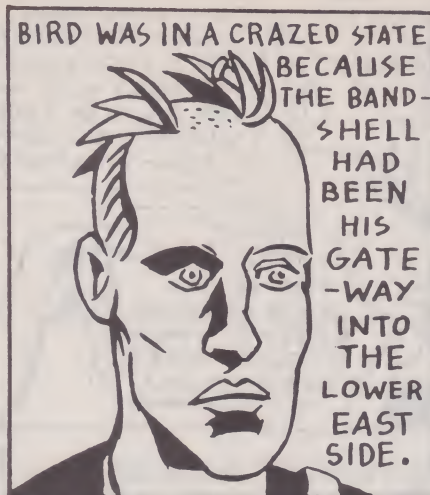
As a teenager, I did a comic strip in pencil where I fractured the grid that comics strips are in. I started doing diagonal panels and panels that crashed into each other and all kinds of crazy modern stuff—this was when I was 16. I showed the work to Jeff Jones and Vaughn Bodé and they said "This is the greatest thing in the world, don't ever stop doing it," at which point I couldn't do comics anymore. I couldn't draw it again; I stopped working for a long time. When I got back into comics, I was feeling my way around and I eventually came upon this style of doing these extremely simplified universal images. They were very influenced by Keith Haring and a number of other artists of my generation who were doing street art that was very simplified and iconic and had a notion of a universal human who was of no race and no gender. I was very attracted to that and it was a very good style for propaganda work. That was very much my focus in the '80s. I did a number of stencils for the street. My first street stencil was against the invasion of Granada it was a woman standing in front of a tank and it said "Stop the Invasion," which shows what I knew about Granada because they weren't arriving in tanks but in boats, [laughs] but it looked right. I put it up all over New York and didn't get caught. The poster was very reductive and stark and kind of impersonal and that was the direction I went, having gone away from these exploding panels that I did while I was a teenager. I was trying to get more of a sense of order in my life; clear values and clear ideas. That sort of work was what filled up my first book which was called *You Don't Have To Fuck People Over To Survive*. That focus continued up until 1988 and the Tompkins Square Park riot. That brought me into a much more real activism and brought me into becoming a house member at a squat and putting ideas into practice. I think there was always a tension for me in the late '70s and early '80s because there seemed to be no real movement. You'd express these ideas, but what good were they? What were they for? What did they really do? In the late 1980s, I became involved in something that seemed to be a real movement and have real energy. At that point, I was experiencing this in a very pragmatic and realistic way in terms of individual people and their interactions in this situation. My work started to become a lot more literary in a conventional sense—specific characters in specific places. A lot of it came from real life but it was life brought through the lens of

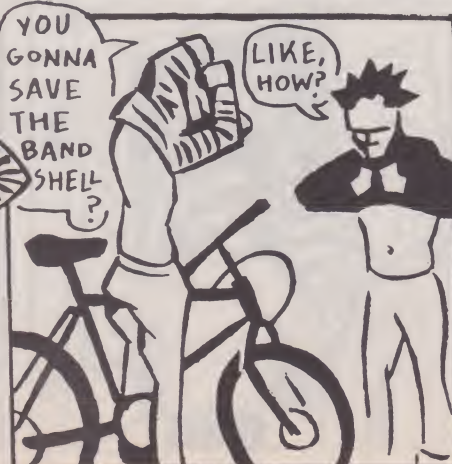
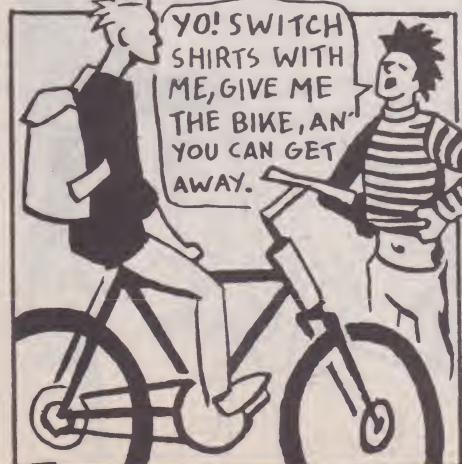
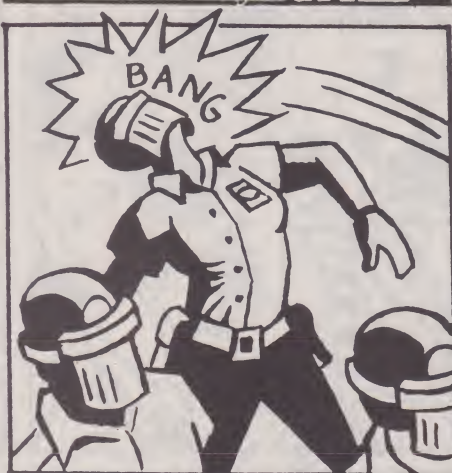
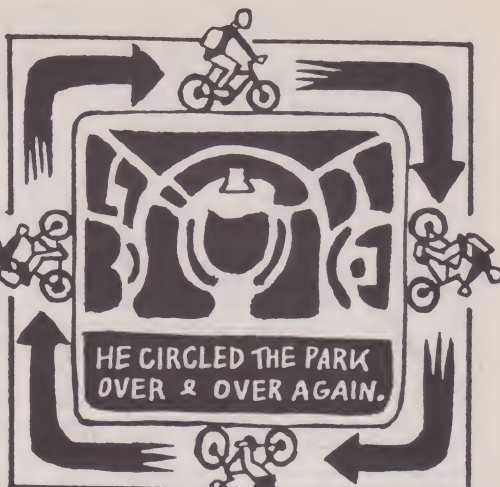
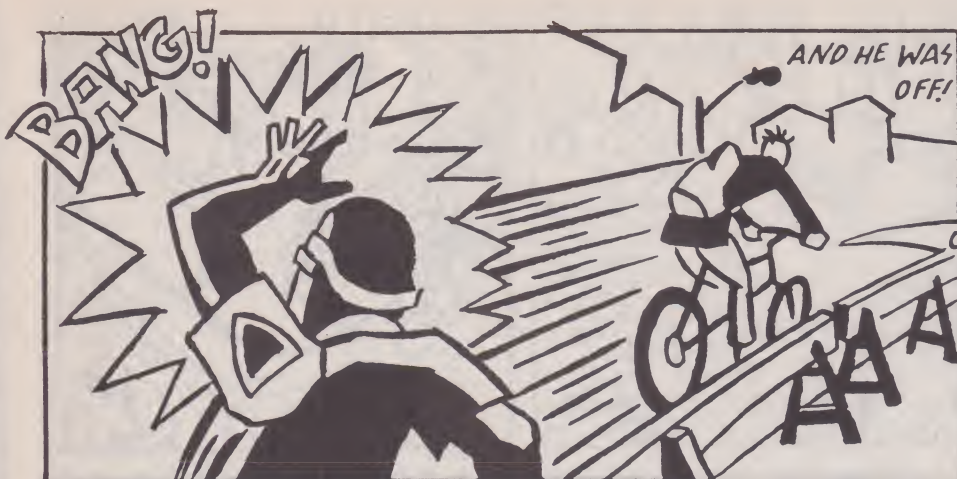
art. That is what has built up to my current work that I'm doing now which is a graphic novel with complex characters and backgrounds and people with features—some people's nose point up, some people's nose points down; that may seem like an insignificant detail, but wars have been fought over it. I think I also became a little frustrated with my propaganda images as they started to really be used as propaganda, and I realized that almost anyone could use them for almost anything. Sometimes there was a real question of truth in advertising. Someone could be using these images and not be doing something completely ethical with them. The images were broad and simple and made the world look broad and simple. They presented an easy solution and a good guy and a bad guy and a universal humanity we could all identify with. I started to question that and whether that was really an honest way to portray a political situation. Maybe people deserved a more complex truth. That's what inspired my current work.

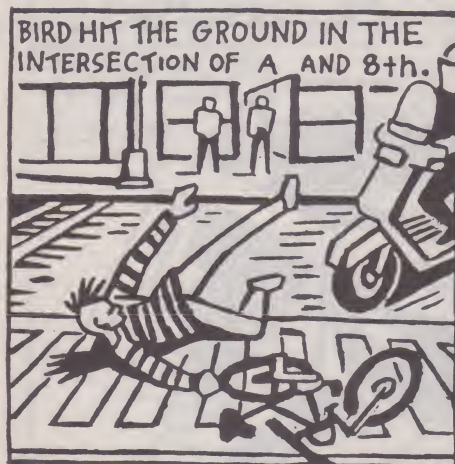
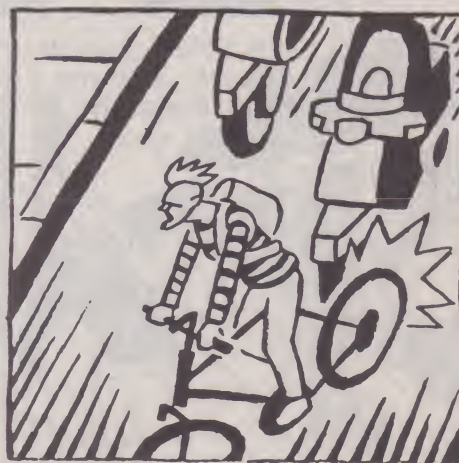
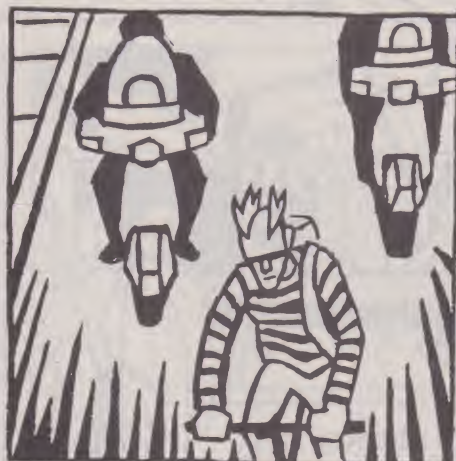
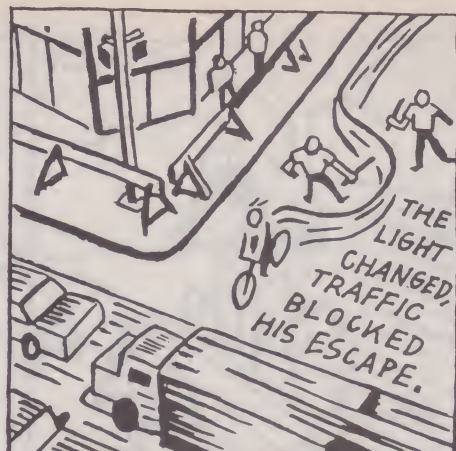
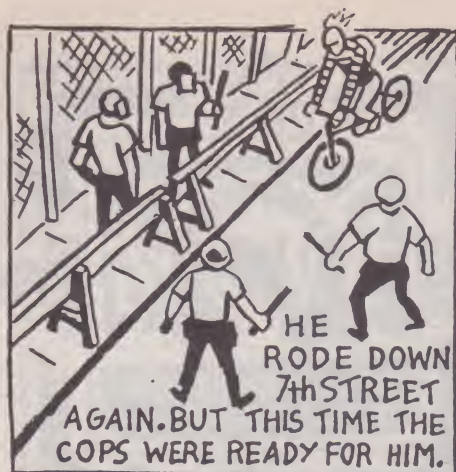
How long have you been working on the novel now?

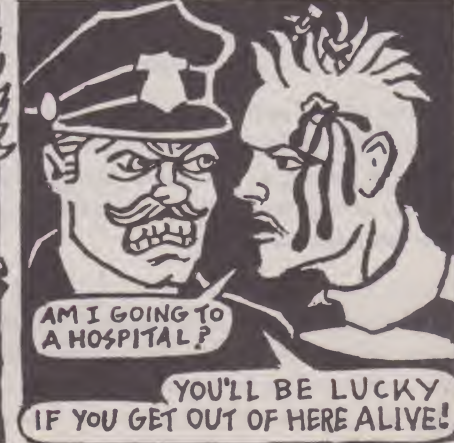
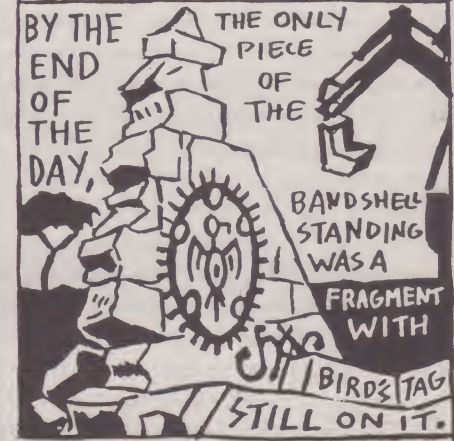
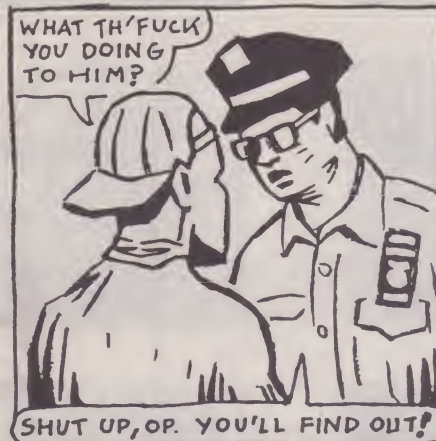
It depends on your definition of work. I would say that I began the process that brought me to this novel around 1985 when I first started to meet with squatters and deal with neighborhood issues. The first time I put pen to paper was in 1990, when I did the first chapter which was called "Siege." It was a description—a fairly accurate description—of three days in our lives when we were defending a building against potential demolition. At that time, I didn't really know where I was going to go with this. I was very affected by *The Watchmen* series. It reintroduced me to the idea of a complex literary structure in comics. Even though that was super-heroes, which I had mostly lost interest in, it struck a nerve with me. I thought, "Gee, I could describe this whole situation." In 1989 I was involved in something called "The Reoccupation of the ABC Community Center." It was really an awesome event, you'll see it in my book. It involved an enormous number of people, and there was a certain point where I remember saying to myself, "I could put this all down on paper and it would really be something." At that point I had a different relationship to political art. It was agitprop, it was done to inspire people to do something. But now I wanted to describe things that actually went on and give people a better understanding of them; to record events and to some extent try to give insight into them and give people an idea of what else they could do. I did two pieces that year. I did "Siege" and "The Tragedy of 319," which to my shock was bought and published by *Heavy Metal* magazine. It was so much money that not only could I live for a year, but it was enough for me to pay for putting the water in a squat. It was so much money I was like, "Oh my god, this is what they pay real comic artists?" I couldn't believe it. That made me think "Wow, this could really be something." But then life became complicated. Tompkins Park was closed, we went through a year of struggle around that; I went through a lot of struggle with the squat and trying to keep things going, and I kind of drifted away from working on the book. Around four or five years ago, I had a real break with the building I was a part of and I gave up my space there. You'll see in the book what inspired that, but it was basically about problems the building had dealing with violence against women and the spillover into violence against other people as well. At that point I said, "Well, it's time for me to do my book," and I kind of retreated, to some degree, from political activism for a couple of years and started working on this graphic novel. I've been working on it steadily for four or five years, in spite of the fact that I continue to be drawn into politics and do other work as well. My main focus has been to try and turn that period of my life into a piece of art. I felt that I we all of us here on the Lower East Side had been through something really huge. I wanted to show respect for what I'd been through and what I'd done and also to show respect for what other people had done, what they'd been through, by creating a work of art. It has always been the function of artists to turn suffering and struggle into something beautiful to derive meaning from experience. ©











Art Chantry is from another planet, I'm almost positive. And he's one of my heroes. Chantry successfully keeps one foot in punk rock and one foot in design culture so as to keep an eye on what's going on, as well as throw the occasional monkey wrench into the works of both. In a world where the computer has turned most design into a homogenous-looking mud, you can spot a Chantry piece a mile away. And you can spot that piece as frequently in the mom and pop record store as you can in the pages of Print or Communication Arts. Chantry's style and attitude keep him head and shoulders above other designers in both arenas. His work is both familiar and original, his sentiments are both rock 'n' roll as well as real world, but neither lose the element that ties it all together; the man making the art. Read on for a visit to Planet Chantry.

Interview by Josh Hooten

I've never worked for a major corporation without taking it up the butt. To begin with, they have entire divisions of lawyers whose job it is to figure out how to not pay their bills. Just look at their tax load. Last year Boeing paid less taxes than I did—in fact, I think they got money back. Give me a break!

Interesting.

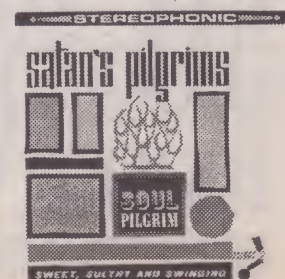
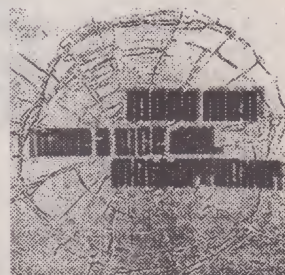
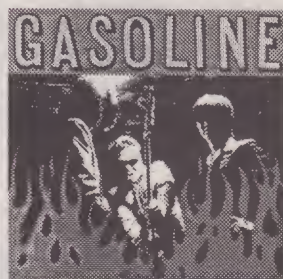
You might have caught on that I'm extremely anti-corporate.

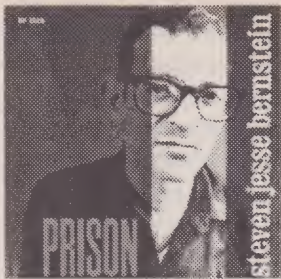
So does this mean you don't work for corporations?

I try not to and when I do, I make sure it's on my terms, but that doesn't mean much because they'll lie and cheat. The worst corporations I've ever worked for are the major record labels. Every time I feel like I've got my ass completely covered, they'll find a new way to get at it—they're just horrible. Occasionally, I will work with them if the circumstances look favorable, like if some friends of mine are recording for them and they want me to do the cover or somebody at the label gets in touch with me and is a fan of my work and does everything they can to protect me. Those things usually don't mean much, but the chance is there. But generally speaking, when it's over they've redesigned it and completely trashed it and it looks nothing like what I wanted and it's embarrassing. I've actually tried to pull my name off of a few of those; I tried to pull it off a Soundgarden record, I tried to pull it off a Southern Culture record, a Seaweed record, a Green Apple Quick Step record. There's a number of these types of records that by the time it was all done it had been so fucked with that it really wasn't even my work anymore. Some of those bands are my friends, but it's still stupid.

I imagine at that point the band is so far out of the loop that they couldn't help. I think it's interesting that you don't own a computer and I'm curious if you decided that you didn't want to work that way or have you always just worked the way you do and never felt there was a need?

Both. I've always worked this way, so I don't feel a need to have a computer and secondly, I've made the conscious choice not to get a computer because stuff that comes off a computer doesn't look the way I want it to look. I had a computer for a short time that a friend gave me but they took it back when I couldn't figure out how to turn it on. [Laughs] It did make a good doorstop though! The thing I find objectionable about computers is the high level of mediocre production values. Everything is always





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the same coming out of a computer. Everything comes off of it so clean and precise. It used to be that precision graphics were very hard to do, especially by hand, and it became highly sought after. If it was very precise looking, it was tough—especially as you go back in time. Computers can do precise with the push of a button so all of a sudden everything looks precise and clean. I like stuff that doesn't look clean. I originally went to school to be an archaeologist even though I was already supporting myself as a graphic designer. I've always liked things that look like they've been lived in. I drive a 1969 Dodge Pickup with dents and rust. Partially because that's what I can afford, but also because aesthetically it's right in line with who I am. I've always worn clothes with holes in them. I did it in high school—I graduated in 1972. I'm older than you guys; I'm probably old enough to be your father! I've always been exactly this. I dress the same way I did in high school, I have the same bad attitude, I've just gotten fatter and balder. But getting back to the computer issue, computers have a place. I'm not knocking computers, but I don't think they're the answer to everything. My other big complaint is that the computer industry has been so good at selling computers as some sort of wonderdrug, but all they really are is a hammer that pounds nails. I mean it's a solid gold hammer, but it still pounds nails. Just because you've got a hammer, it doesn't mean you're an architect. We have this love in this culture for technology that is really kind of sick. Like nuclear reactors. Do you know how nuclear reactors actually work, what their function actually is? They boil water. That's all they do. I always thought there was some magic process that went from nuclear energy straight to electricity, but I was looking at a diagram and it's

never been easier to be a graphic designer; all you have to do is buy the software. But at the same time, it's never been tougher because now everybody is a graphic designer and for people like me, it's difficult to get my work processed. It's very frustrating. I think computers are both a good and bad thing. Ultimately computers are going to be where the next source of amateurism and ideas come from. It is the only venue left for DIY at this point. Anybody can access a computer and build their own Websites and put their shit in there and it's all Do It Yourself. It's too expensive to get things printed other ways now—even Kinko's is too fucking expensive, it's cheaper to do it on a computer. That's where the communication source is and that's where the next big underground culture is going to emerge, there's just no other options. But at the same time, it has caused enormous problems for people like me.

The prevalence and accessibility of computers has turned a lot of non-artists into designers and a lot of people are doing design and not thinking of it as art.

Well they're not trained designers either. It's like the role of graphic designer has now been delegated to a kind of production skill largely because the people running computers aren't trained designers, they're trained technicians and they're being hired as art directors and things. And you see this enormous quality drop. Every time a new technology is introduced into a culture like ours you see a long period of transition that is usually associated with amateurism and a lack of quality control and it takes a number of years to get fully integrated into the system as a tool that's functional for

I've always liked things that look like they've been lived in. I drive a 1969 Dodge Pickup with dents and rust. Partially because that's what I can afford, but also because aesthetically it's right in line with who I am.

a big steam generator. And I thought, "there's gotta be better ways to boil water." That's the way that we think in this culture, and there comes a point where that is crippling. What happens because of the sudden and dramatic paradigm shift from conventional graphic design to computer generated graphic design is that all the support systems: typesetters, dark-room stripping, graphic designers, copywriters, editors, and soon, pressmen, are going to be eliminated from the design process. It's going to go straight from the desktop to a printed piece. In that shift, there is an enormous drop in quality—I see million-dollar typos happening. Because of this shift, there is no demand for the way I process things and the result is that my artwork is now considered custom, expensive work and very difficult to get done well, or get done at all. So all of a sudden my work—the way I've always worked, and the way graphic design has been practiced for hundreds of years—got tossed out in two or three years. They refer to the way I do things as "traditional" or "conventional." No, the conventional is now computers. All my work ends up having to go through a computer at one point or another when it's out of my hands. And at that point, there's some idiot running the computer who's going to "fix" my work for me. It's

us. We're going through an enormous period of really fucking bad typography, bad design, bad this, bad that. That's what David Carson was all about. He was doing all this bad stuff and presenting it and everybody thought it was young and fresh and new—let's do it! His stance was essentially a punk stance—an anti-graphic stance. What he was trying to do was break every rule he could. If it came off the machine fucked up, he'd just use it. Everybody thought that was so interesting and new. Well it wasn't, it was just punk shit! He was a surfer for Christ's sake! What happened was that he introduced it into mainstream culture and it got adopted wholesale and everybody copied it and all of a sudden bad graphics became good graphics. It was a really revolutionary thing and I applaud him for that, although I think his later work became a parody of itself. His early stuff was just monumental.

I think his style it isn't something that's particularly difficult to copy once you've seen it done. Coming up with an approach like that is the achievement, but copying it is easy.



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Yeah, and he began to copy himself. All of *Raygun* was rehashing ideas he first proposed in *Beach Culture*. If you really look at what he was doing with *Beach Culture* and you go back to the punk scene and surfer graphics and skateboard shit, even the stuff he was doing for *Transworld Skateboarding*, that's where it all came from. That's punk graphics gone mainstream: purified and reprocessed. Now everybody copycats it and it looks idiotic. It's the equivalent of back in the '60s when the corporate world tried to copy psychedelia and it came out with those Hallmark Card flowers on Volkswagons and *Laugh In* TV Show graphics. There's a subcultural style that gets adopted usually through some other transferral, like music, into a mainstream analysis and before you know it, you've got grunge. That's what happened to David Carson—he was the conduit. I look at myself very self-consciously practicing the conduit exercise. I look at myself having one foot in the subculture and one foot in the mainstream. I act as a unit to transfer ideas just to watch what happens.

The way I was introduced to your work was through records, but most of the work of yours that I've seen was in *Print* annuals and *Communication Arts* magazine and design books.

That it gets into those shows is kind of amazing!

When I was in school studying design, there were some instructors there who kind of prided themselves on being up on and involved in the latest cutting edge movements in design and prid-

In America, that translates to *Emigre* being held up as this incredibly important part of the history of design, but if you're not from the Design Culture, which is a very small culture, you don't even know what *Emigre* is.

I've always looked at *Emigre* as being absolutely nothing. I've never gotten what the big deal is about *Emigre*. There are no ideas in there, that I've seen, that hadn't already been exhausted by the late 70s. There's nothing new in there and there never has been, yet people who practice design culture look at it and go apeshit because it vaguely looks like Design Culture design, but at the same time it brings in some of these kind of anarchistic ideas—does that word anarchistic sound familiar? If you've ever talked to Rudy Vanderlans, he's just a real real uptight guy. It's interesting because I'm in a position where I get to partake in Design Culture activities a lot. Like I'm going to Philadelphia this week to lecture to the AIGA and stuff like that. I get to jury shows and stuff because I can articulate my ideas—it's very important to be able to articulate your ideas in graphic design. Carson can't articulate his ideas for shit. He'd be a superstar in a big, important way if he could just explain what the fuck he's doing. But he can't, because he's an instinct designer. I like to think I can design with both my instinct and with my intellect simultaneously and then be able to analyze the work. When my hands are doing it, I don't know what's going on but when I look at it and think about it over a little bit of time, I can explain it. That's where I kind of see my talent having developed over the

“

I get to participate in this Design Culture but I'm always the weirdo. I'm brought over there and I get set up and when somebody starts turning the monkey grinder organ, they expect me to start dancing with a little cup. Generally, I sit there and denounce a lot of their ideas. Usually my lectures are full of snide remarks and black humor and sarcasm and they don't know what to make of it but they enjoy it because it's fun to look at.

”

ed themselves on having spoken to Rudy Vanderlans once or twice in their lives and they were, without a doubt, the most pretentious people I've ever met.

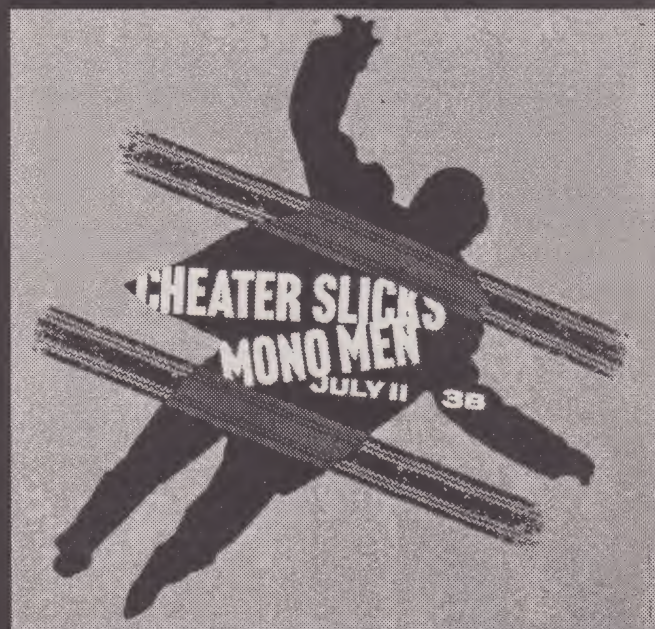
Those people are in a subculture called Design Culture which is a very distinct subculture that dominates the design practice. I don't partake in that. Academia is not where design ideas come from. Design ideas come from the popular language. If you look at the history of graphic design in America, Design Culture talks about the Bauhaus—come on people graphic design in America is the junk we like: it's hot rod graphics; old signage from the 1800s; it's bad ads from trade magazines in the 1930s; it's garbage laying in the street. That is the history of graphic design, not some astute guys sitting on their thumbs in Switzerland—that's ridiculous! Anybody who knows anything can point that out, except people who practice Design Culture.

years—that and just a vast body and knowledge of real crap. I get to participate in this Design Culture but I'm always the weirdo. I'm brought over there and I get set up and when somebody starts turning the monkey grinder organ, they expect me to start dancing with a little cup. Generally, I sit there and denounce a lot of their ideas. Usually my lectures are full of snide remarks and black humor and sarcasm and they don't know what to make of it but they enjoy it because it's fun to look at. Hopefully I start to sway some of their thought but I don't know if it works. They only real thing that works is producing good work. Money and all that other shit doesn't count.

The thing that always struck me about your work was that it's always pretty consistent, and in the context of seeing it amongst all the computer-generated stuff and the Photoshop masturbation fest stuff, it always struck me as weird that your stuff was in there at all. I was curious what the attraction of getting recognized in that arena was for you.

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DARING ADULT ENTERTAINMENT

Emcee El Catrin

Well I wasn't always this way. Back in the mid 80's in Seattle, there was absolutely no market for what I did. I struggled and I starved and I worked for underground things: rock, theater, avante garde art, and I worked on a zine called *The Rocket* and in all of it there was no money—no fucking money, no interest, no nothing. You were only playing to an audience of about 100 people. At the same time, I had gotten married and bought a house. I was trying to survive, and I really thought the only way to survive in Seattle—aka America, the world, the universe—was to follow the road. I actually tried to make a living as a corporate designer and I did work for GTE and Nordstrom and other corporations and I'd pick up all these stupid little projects and they were all corporate brochures and I'd win all sorts of awards with them and they'd pay me OK money, but they would never hire me again. They could tell I wasn't much of a team player. I'd walk in with a little suit and tie but they could still tell I wasn't one of them. As a result, I suffered because I could not make a living. And that work, obviously, wasn't where my interests were, I was only doing it to make money and I was miserable. I was also an alcoholic and I quit drinking, and when you quit drinking it's a pretty traumatic experience, you go through a lot of weird shit. But I decided at that point I was going to quit working with assholes just for the money. That was my rule. I decided to take jobs based on whether they were interesting or not, or they were friends of mine. And the result was that the quality of my work took a quantum leap. Also as a result, I never enjoyed what I did more. It became

work. What I have to do is refocus and become a money grubber if I'm going to have a career at all, which will be an interesting thing to approach, I don't really know what is going to happen. That's going to be real interesting to deal with.

You're pretty dug in. One thing I think about working in underground circles, and I may be wrong, is that there's a level of loyalty that doesn't exist in the corporate world.

That's a little dicey. I don't think there's much loyalty in America for anything. There's none at corporate levels or in business unless you can make money for them—that's the only loyalty they buy. In the underground circuit there's a kind of kid in a candy store thing, "Oh this tastes great, but look over there," and then they just lurch. Look at how much everybody hates Seattle now, whereas a couple of years ago it was solid gold—now it's a chunk of lead. It's like the whole *Maximum Rockroll* thing. I can't wait for that whole thing to die away because it's so fucking narrow minded and vicious and stupid about what is good and what is bad and what is evil and what is not evil that it has become crippling. What happens in underground fashion culture and American culture is that to purify a style you have to become narrowly defined. That's what subculture is about, that's how it communicates with itself. When it becomes narrowly defined, it stands out and becomes distinct and people become attracted to it because they can understand it. Then they adopt it and they expand it

“How do you be outrageous in a world that's designed to be outrageous? Isn't that being normal?”

utter fun for me and it's never stopped being fun. I never dread going to work—I can't wait to go to work. Another thing that happened was I had never gotten more attention. People started noticing my work in a big way. And last but not least, I had never made more money. I had to work twice as hard, I got paid less per project, but it was a pleasure. I have a big volume that comes through here and it's all little projects and bands that will probably break up before the record even comes out, but that's what I survive on. I don't survive on big projects from corporations, I survive on Joe Blow from Kokomo who's got a band and wants to put a record out. I don't make good money—I worry about paying the rent a lot—if I lost my cheap rent, I'd probably have to leave Seattle because I couldn't afford anything else. But at the same time, I've still made a big mark out there—and in the process, I've managed to help a lot of people. Actually, Chronicle books is going to be doing a book on me. It's an interesting thing to think about because what will happen is they will document my career up to this point—I'm 43 now—and what happens when you do that is it becomes something of a mausoleum; you become entombed. Everybody is fascinated with the book and after that, for the second half of your life, nobody gives a shit what you do. I mean really, who gives a shit what Neville Brody is up to? Nobody cares, we documented all we cared about and that's it. So all of a sudden, my career will take this sudden shift where I'll never be more well known, but at the same time I will never be getting less

again into a more palatable form, thus punk rock becomes grunge, or punk rock becomes new wave. I think what's happening with *MRR* and the new punk purist underground is it has become so narrowly defined that the attractiveness of it became channeled and it's starting to go through it's disillusioned phase and it will become aced out. You kind of wonder what's going to happen, what's the next thing that's going to happen. I've been fairly good at predicting when things are going to start happening, here and there, and after you've taken punk rock to this level and you add mainstream success and underground purity success, it's kind of played itself out—there's nothing new. How do you be outrageous in a world that's designed to be outrageous? Isn't that being normal? It's just become exhausted. How do you become more hippy than the next hippy? It's stupid and at that point it starts to collapse and become nothing. What's going to replace it? There's something out there happening right now, and I don't know where it is, that's going to be the next kind of roots rock rebellion against the status quo. How that's going to end up developing over the next five or ten years is going to be interesting to watch. I have my subtle predictions as to where it might be, but it may not work out. It will probably be on the Internet somewhere because that's where amateurism is and that's where DIY is and that's where all the good ideas come from. Innovation doesn't come out of corporations, it comes out of people, you know? ©

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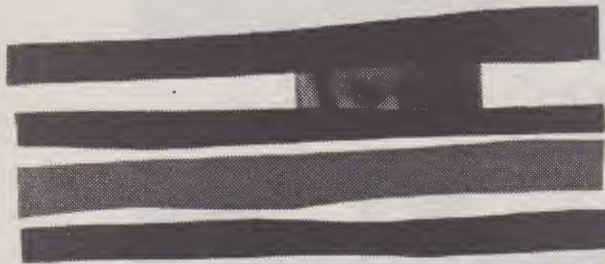
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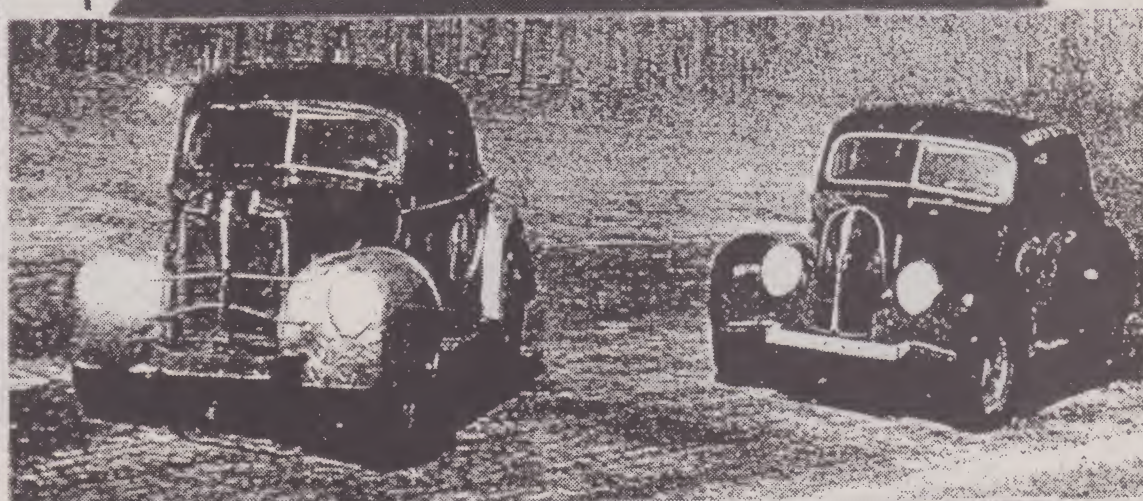
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PAUL DRAKE

INTERVIEW BY JOSH HOOTEN

Self portrait. Williamsburg-Brooklyn, NYC, 1997.
Sort of home for two years



The Drake. Portrait of a Serial Photographer.
New York based king of the road gives it up to Das Planet. More talent than you can shake a tripod at, I'm going to shut up and let the work speak for itself.

How did you get into photography?

I went to Europe seven years ago with my point and shoot piece of shit camera and just started looking at things visually. I took a few pictures and had fun doing it, so two years later I finally went back to college and I took a photo class and I enjoyed it. I went to photo school for a year then dropped out and did it on my own.

What do you think attracted you to photography over other visual arts?

I have no drawing skills or anything and I just felt good at photography. For some reason it just clicked with me.

Clicked with you. Real funny.

[Laughs]

You've got some photos in Dischord ads, you did the Jimmy Eat World photos for their record, the cover photo of the Frodus/Roadside Monument split record, where else have people seen your stuff?

Christie Front Drive stuff. A few Crank Records pictures—Crank is bullshit, I'd like to mention that. I hate Crank. Mineral used my photos. The Boy's Life/Christie Front Drive split 10" which I'm pretty proud of. The first Boy's Life record. The Superchunk "Incidental Music" insert.

I want to talk a bit about how you live. You've been described to me as the "roadie extraordinaire." How do you get hooked up with all these bands to go on tour with?

I used to do shows in Colorado and that's how I met the first band that I toured with, Turnkey, and then I toured with Christie Front Drive through that. I really enjoyed my first tour so from then on, I would really be aggressive with people and let them know that I'd really love to go out on tour with them. It worked out with different people and then as you go along you're on tour with these different bands and you're meeting all these different people and you become friends.

The price you pay for getting to go out on the road so much is possibly not feeling settled anywhere, not being able to hold down a job or climb some corporate ladder or have much security and so forth. I'm just curious what the perks for doing all this are.

I'm old. It's not like I've done this all my life. I've done the nine-to-five jobs; I've done school; I've done all that bullshit; paying rent; all that kind of day in and day out stuff. Work your job, go home, drink, eat, sleep—I've done all that and I don't like it. I didn't set out to do this kind of stuff, it just

Birds, Tree, Building. Dallas, Texas. Winter 1995



Punk Planet



3 Chairs. Bryant Park, NYC. Summer 1996.



Killing Joke, Jaz Coleman. Mercury Theater. Denver Colorado. 1995.



VSS. White Sands National Monument. New Mexico. Spring 1997.

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DC&P 12

happened. I went on this first tour on a break between school and then it just kept going. I've been broke for the last three years, but it's worked out somehow.

I know the last two times I've seen you, you've had less than a dollar in your wallet.

Yeah, I'm always broke, but it's good. People lend me money and I pay them back, I have a lot of friends in this country and I owe it all to them. They've kept me alive for sure.

So why just go out with the bands, why not be in one?

I have no musical experience. I can't play any instruments. I have no desire to be in a band. I mean there's a little desire to be up there and perform, I think that's anyone's dream, but I personally like to be behind the scenes with a camera. And I like roadieing, it's fun.

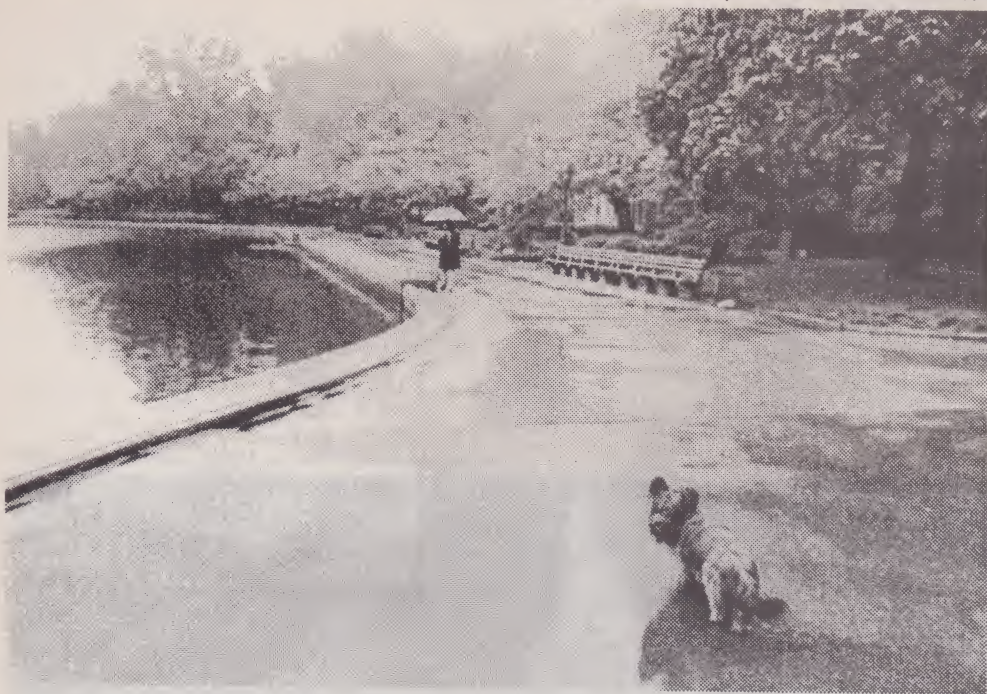
Superchunk, Mac and Laura. Fox Theatre, Boulder, Colorado. 1995



Being on tour with all these bands provides you with some good opportunities to take photos.

Yeah it does. I don't do much live stuff because I'm not very good at it. Plus when you go to shows there's like 20 kids taking pictures. I've done it too much and it gets boring. Especially because I see so many bands and 99% of them bore the shit out of me. Every now and then some band will kick my ass, but usually I don't pay attention. It's bad, I know, but with five bands every night, I just can't. Taking pictures live gets old, even with the bands I tour with. Live photography gets boring and I find it hard to be creative. It's all been done so I save my film for other things. I like doing posed stuff. The VSS stuff in the white sand dunes was definitely a highlight.

Dog and Woman. Rainy Central Park, NYC. Summer 1996.



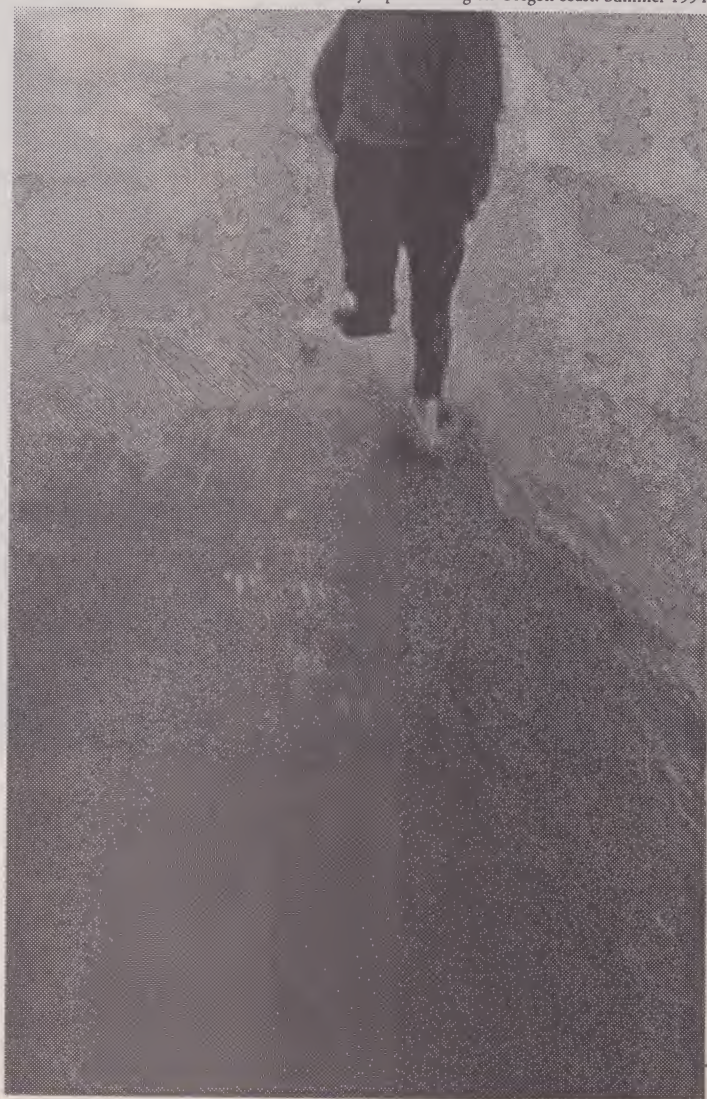
What is some of your more memorable stuff?

Being with Giant's Chair was really good. Scott Hobart is probably going to be one of my best friends for a long time. They had a really rough tour so we just treated it as a vacation and went camping and went to the beach a lot. That was a really good tour; not crowd-wise, or show-wise but people-wise. Going out with Sunshine was the trip of a lifetime. Just to hang out with four people from the Czech Republic who are the nicest people in the world. They will probably be friends of mine for a long time as well. I was sad to leave them because they were awesome to be around. I look forward to touring with more bands from other countries, that's a goal of mine. Going on tour with Christie Front Drive was great. We called it the "Get Wet" tour because we went swimming every day—that was awesome. It was a really positive tour.

What's the hard part?

Dealing with members of some bands. It's hard—you live in a van with someone for five weeks. You're in a small apartment with five people in it and people have different ways of dealing with things. I'm a pretty easygoing guy, but sometimes it gets difficult. The roadie has to remember that he's just the roadie and not to get involved with band shit because it will blow up in your face. Fighting on tour is not good, I can't stand it. ☹

Chrissy Piper running on Oregon coast. Summer 1994.



Sun Burnt Baby doll. Tempe, Arizona, 1996



Horse in Verdi, Nevada. Christmas 1996.



High Fashion Tattoos By Kim



Being a fan and collector of tattoos, I was excited to find an article about Chicago based artist Kim Saigh in International Tattoo Art magazine a few weeks before I was to move to this fair city. Upon arriving Sinker and I went down to the shop to check out her work. "Wow. She's amazing," I believe were Dan's exact words. And she is. She's got great range, impeccable drawing skills, and her color palette really brings her work to life. And she's really nice. Kim is currently working out of Guilty and Innocent Productions with fellow tattooist John Clue and body piercer Mike Leatherman. When in Chicago do yourself a favor and stop by to check out the rest of her portfolio.

What was it like the first time you tattooed somebody?

I was scared out of my mind and my hand was shaking. I was doing two tribal dolphins and it scarred pretty bad; it wasn't a very nice tattoo. It was on a friend but we're still friends so it's OK.

What was it like early on? When did it become more comfortable?

At first I couldn't wait to do another one. It felt like something I just really had to learn, so each time it got better and better and I got a feel for the machine more and more each time I did it. It's one of those things you have to completely devote yourself to. There's no part-time tattooists I don't think.

I don't think I would want somebody tattooing me that wasn't committed. How did you get to doing tattoos in the first place? How did you get into art and then tattoos as art?

When I was around 16 I really became interested in doing tattoos because I had so many friends who had bad tattoos—It looked like these people just couldn't draw. Obviously if you can make lines and color, why can't you just put them in the right places? I wanted a tattoo, but I didn't want a bad one so I figured if I got into it... That was my rationale and I went to a tattoo parlor and started asking around and they gave me the runaround, but two years later my friend hooked me up with some people. When I walked in, they weren't really expecting a female, but they wanted a female artist so they offered to train me based on that.

Tattoo history seems like a very macho, very male history. Do you think being a female has made it easier or more difficult for you?

Both. There aren't many female artists. People, at times, have been more reluctant to take me seriously because I'm female, but at the same time when they see that I am serious, it can work to my benefit. I don't like that either way; whoever is better should get the recognition. But I do think that to a certain degree I get recognized because I am a girl.

Tattooing is such a personal and permanent art form and is unique because you're trying to express yourself artistically on somebody else's body and it will be with them forever but you also have to try and not conflict with their wishes about what they want on their body permanently. It's sort of a curious dynamic between you as an artist and them wearing your work. I want to know how it works communicating with people so they get what they want, but still have it be work that you're interested in.

I think if it was something I knew wasn't my bag, I would just refuse it right off the bat. There are people I will sit down with several times but we just can't seem to get something together that is their style. I make sure they see my book and see the way I draw and if they're comfortable with that then hopefully they'll trust my judgement. I think tattooing is the art of compromise because it is for someone else, and I think that's the cool thing about it. It's cool to bond with someone like that, to have the two ideas intersect.

My next question was actually if you've ever had to compromise to please a client, but I guess that's inherent in the medium.

I think you always have to compromise. Sometimes I've compromised more than I would have liked to. Now I try not to take on that kind of stuff because if I compromise too much of myself, it doesn't come out right and doesn't make me happy.

What is the ideal client like?

Some one who is sincere. I don't have one particular kind of client because my best clients are very different from one another. Just as long as they're really into what they're doing and have an understanding of me and what I'm about. The reciprocal energy is cool.

If you weren't tattooing, what do you think you'd be doing?

I have no idea. Now that I've been tattooing for a while, if I couldn't tattoo anymore I would probably just have some really mundane everyday job and have a whole world of some kind of art outside of that; maybe tattooing underground, or just painting or something like that. I'd probably just have a normal physical labor job where I didn't have to think too much.

What other modes of expression do you have outside of tattooing?

I used to paint but I don't paint that much anymore because tattooing occupies so much of my time and energy. When I'm not here working I'm at home doing drawings for tattoos, so I'm constantly drawing.

Do you ever get burned out?

Yeah, I definitely get burned out, but I'm starting to pick up a pattern as to what burns me out so I've kind of learned to keep that under control. Working too hard or not really focusing on the art end of it really burns me out. If I get stressed out about something else and distracted, but am still working a lot, that gets to me. I try and take small pieces as well as large pieces because for a while there I was just doing all really big tattoos and nothing was getting done. It seemed like there was no reward in any of it, so now I'll take smaller pieces that I can finish in a day so I feel like I'm doing something and finishing something.

What do you think the lasting effect of tattoos being so popular in the last few years will be? When its mainstream popularity blows over, do you think all of this will have a positive effect or a negative effect?

Both. On one hand, people will be more open minded to having tattoos, even if they've gotten something they regret. It will show a lot of people, if they are sincere about it, that they can do it. It's like when a band becomes cool and everyone likes them, the people who were into them originally don't like them anymore because they're so popular. That's what I don't want to have happen with tattoos, but I'm sure it will to a certain degree. Hopefully it will force people to think a little harder. Maybe there won't be such a stereotype on people who are tattooed.

What is the hardest part about doing this?

The first 10 minutes of every tattoo is the worst part. It's just really intense; something big and permanent is about to happen. But once that first 10 minutes is over and I go into my work mode and the person starts to zone out, everything is cool from there on.

What's the most rewarding?

Happy clients. People who refer other people to you or people who have seen your work and think it's really cool. ☺

HIGH TATS BY

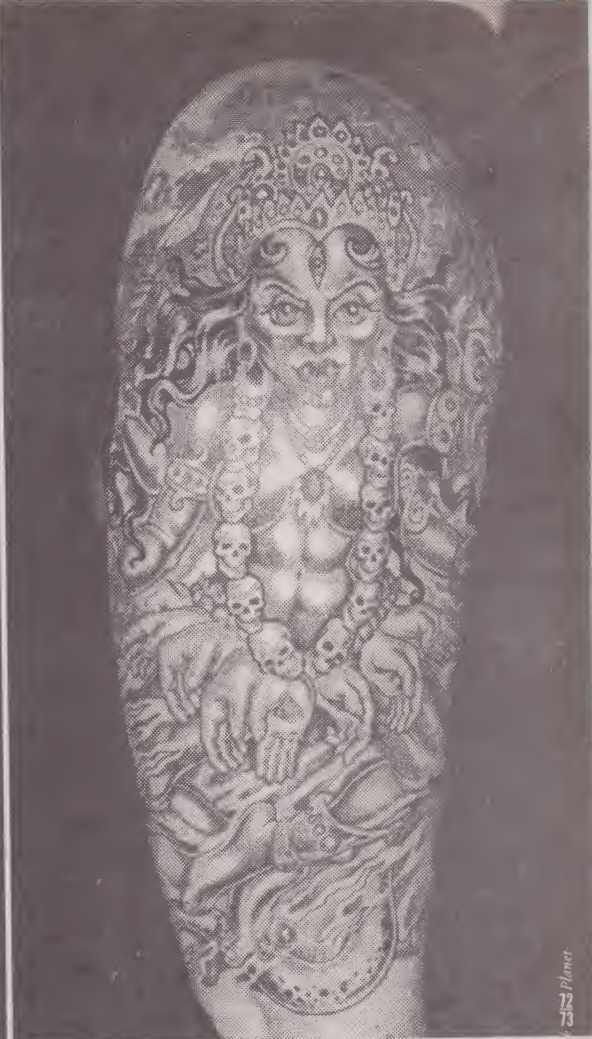




High SATS Tattoos By KTM



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2013

Cynthia Connolly

I remember the first time I saw Cynthia Connolly's photographs. It was years ago; I was a band and we were in the studio recording a couple 7"s. I was passing time by reading a copy of *Speed Kills* that was lying on the table. Within the zine's pages was something that would leave a permanent mark on me: I saw art in a punk zine. It was a series of Cynthia Connolly's photos called "DC People and their Cars" and as stupid as it sounds, it changed me. Being both an artist and a punk, I felt as if I had found something that could finally speak both my languages.

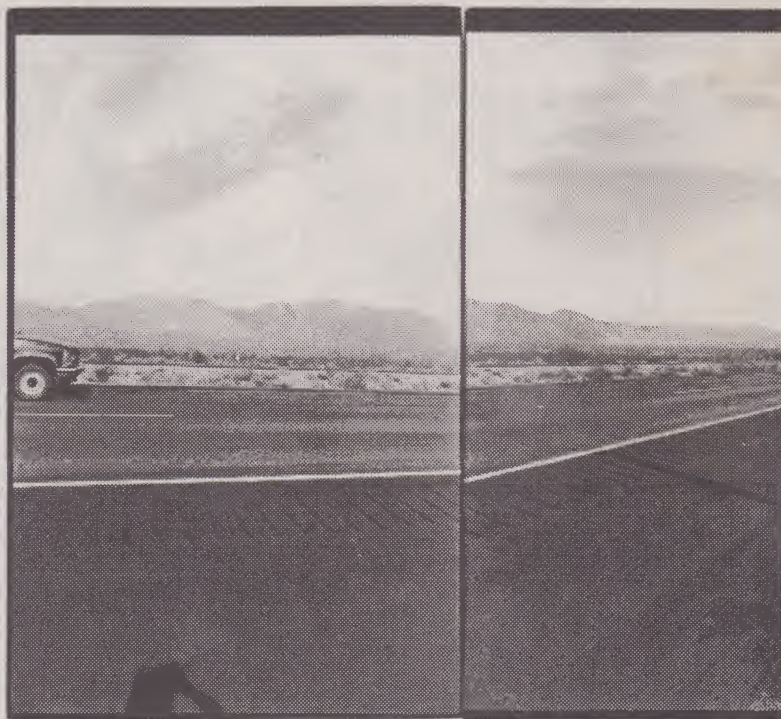
Before DC People, photography in zines was pretty much regulated to the band photo. While definitely an art form in its own right, it's genre photography. Individual photographers can add their own style, but there's no escaping the fact that it will always be a band on a stage. Connolly's photos were different. She took people normally associated with being on stage and took them off it.

Of course, Connolly was ready to take people off the stage, as she'd already documented them on it. In 1987, Connolly, along with Leslie Clague and Sharon Cheslow completed work on the book *Banned in DC*, which documented the DC punk scene from 1979-1985. It is the closest thing to a complete photographic record of any punk scene as I have ever seen. Viewed through today's standards, it's pretty rough aesthetically, but it is a seminal work nonetheless.

Since the DC People series, Connolly's work has moved more towards landscapes. It seems like a natural extension, moving from photographing people near their cars to photographing from within them. In moving to landscapes, however, Connolly didn't lose the talent she exhibited with her DC People photos: her innate ability to capture something as it really is, not as it appears to be. It is that bluntness that makes Connolly's work beautiful. It is a bluntness echoed in punk rock itself.

Interview by **Dan Sinker**

all photographs ©1998 Cynthia Connolly.



Rte. 10 in Colifornia 11/15/96

In the '80s, a lot of people were doing art, but the music was so different and new that the music had the spotlight of attention. I think that throughout the '90s, there was a lot of cool music, but the energy of the music was not as focused as it was in the '80s. Musically, things went in different directions both music-wise and the theory of why you're doing music in the first place. I think at this point, a lot of people started looking at the art because the music wasn't as exciting. People started saying, "Oh yeah! Here's something else that came from all this." For example, when me and Pat Grahm did the photo tour for two years, I felt as though at a lot of places it was the first time people were doing things like that. People were really excited and said, "oh, we've been wanting to do this for a while, this is really cool and we're going to do this from now on." It seemed like a lot of places were like that and we happened to be doing it at that same time period. Just like punk rock in the early '80s, it was people saying "Oh god, this is something that we've heard about." You'd find somebody else from somewhere else and they are doing the exact same thing—you couldn't believe it, but it was true. To me, the art thing is something that I've been thinking a lot about and I think it's the same thing but maybe on a lower level. It seems like a lot of people are doing art and people go to see the art and they support it, not necessarily by buying



it, but just by going to see it. A lot of people used to not do that, and not pay attention to it because they were paying attention to the music. I was just in San Francisco and this woman Sadie had a photo show and showed a film that she had just made and the place was packed! The place was filled with people and they were having a really good time just being there—which is the same with shows, but for a long time art never really got that attention at all. It's kind of neat because it seems like in a way people are no longer scared of art. I think a lot of times people are scared of art because they feel like they're supposed to have to understand what it is, but it doesn't really matter—art is whatever you decide it is.

In a way, that's exactly what punk rock music did. It took this entity which before the late '70s was limited to a fan/performer relationship and broke down that construct.

It is! It's totally that same thing. That's something that I just realized recently too. When I did *Banned in DC* and I laid it out, I thought "Oh my god, this is so arty." Compared to everything else in 1987, I thought it was too clean and too arty. It would just be so clean that it would alienate the people who were in the book and the audience that would read it. [Laughs] I'm laughing because when I look at it now I go, "God, I can't believe I thought

that!" The whole idea was that I wanted it to communicate what I wanted it to communicate and I wanted it on nice paper. What's the big deal about that! Now, it isn't that big of a deal but at the time, to put it on nice paper, nobody had done that! I wanted something that was archival. I didn't want it on newsprint and have it sit there for 10 years and have it turn to dust on the 10th year, that's not what it was for. It was something that you could have for the rest of your life if you wanted it.

You mentioned that you and Pat put your photo show on our and it was out for two years. When did it initially leave on tour?

1995. It was probably 1991 or '92 when I started doing photography again. I graduated from art school in '85 in graphic design, which is a pretty hilarious joke! I was so burnt out on art and hated it so much that I didn't do anything for a really long time. It wasn't until somebody took me to a show of galleries at this convention center thing that I started thinking about art again. For years I had been like, "Oh, I should do photography..." and suddenly I was like, "Why am I not doing it? Because I just don't want to deal with it." So I finally started doing photography again. Pat Grahm lived down the street from Dischord—I don't know how long he had lived here before I hung out with him—and I was like, "We should

You can smell my photos and you know where they've been!

sit around and critique our photographs." So we would meet once in a while and show each other what we're doing and critique each other. It's kind of embarrassing and weird to do it. I hadn't taken classes in Photography since like 1981. I wanted to ignore classes and learn from people, and Pat was so fucking good! Somewhere in there we decided to do the photo tour thing. It was actually something that I had thought of years ago thinking, "How cool could it be if art could tour like a band?" It could go from place to place—the coolest thing would be if you could drive it from place to place, but you can't do that. You have to be able to work and make money and it's too much work for that. Hanging is eight hours of work—it's exhausting! When you're done it's as if you've just regurgitated your whole life out on the walls. Then you have to stand there and hang out with people for the rest of the night. Our photos were hanging at this cafe in Milwaukee that Pat knew some people at. While it was hanging there, I thought, "Oh my god! This could be the tour of art touring like a band!" And I got really excited about it and I said, "I'd better find somewhere else for it to go—where's a city near Milwaukee?" And so we started with Chicago and then went out West.

So the tour happened because you got a show in Milwaukee...

Yeah, I think it happened because we got a show in Milwaukee. I can't even remember if it happened simultaneously, like we sent it to Milwaukee and I all of a sudden thought, "This is it! This is that thing that I've thought about it." I don't remember if it was planned before it launched off but definitely when it went to Milwaukee, there wasn't a full-on plan and there was no tour. It sat in Milwaukee for like three months and the guy was like, "Yeah, just leave it here!" He was a really cool guy, it was at the Fuel cafe. I've never been there, but just by the guy's reaction towards the show and his enthusiasm for it, it seems like the coolest place ever! I could tell a lot by his reaction and also by the smoke on the photos! When we got them in Chicago, you could smell the smoke on the photos. I had never seen so much smoke residue in my life! [Laughs] It was gross. Before that, my photos without Pat's were in this place in Australia, which is another really long-ass story. They were hanging in a cafe and some of them were over where they were doing frying. They were hanging for six weeks and they came back were the grossest shit! I took them out of the frames and you can

still smell the grease in the mats. It's amazing, you can smell my photos and you know where they've been! [Laughs]

Now saying that you'd like to tour your art "like a band" is all well and good, but actually doing that is a totally different thing. As opposed to bands, where the infrastructure is already set up thanks to the bands of the early '80s that paved the way and the bands that continue to do it now, the infrastructure isn't there for this. You weren't putting your photos in places where bands normally play, they were going into cafes and galleries and stuff. How did you go about setting that up?

It's funny because now it's much easier because it went on tour and people saw it and they saw the thing that says, "If you guys want to show it in your town write to us," so people write and say "We want to do it" and that makes it easier. The thing that helped us a lot early on is that my photos were in *Speed Kills* before the tour. That's the whole reason I took the photos in the first place because I wanted to do something for *Speed Kills* and I was trying to figure out what to do. I knew they liked music and cars so it was like, "Oh, I'll take pictures of people with their cars." And people knew the photos from *Speed Kills*. When I was in Australia in the first place they hung, people were saying, "Oh wow! These were in *Speed Kills*." And I said, "Huh? You guys get *Speed Kills* out here?" And all of a sudden I realized that people did know that, and it was so easy. The greatest thing about this was that it was art and music combined. The pop culture of music was the thing that made it easier to do. If it was just plain old art that had nothing to do with music, it would probably have been way harder.

Do you think that's still the case now?

Yeah. People will say, "Oh, can you send us slides of your work and blah blah blah." And you have to spend so much time focusing on one place, it would be like a full-time job in itself. People don't understand how much time bands take to do their tours and I don't think people realize how much time it takes to do the art thing too. I just don't think people understand that it takes all your energy to do it and plus you have another job too. But basically, to set up the tour, I'd call people; I'd talk to people; I'd start thinking about people I knew in certain towns, especially



Douglas, AZ 11/5/95



Christina Billotte with a Thomas Campbell painting at a rest stop near McLean, TX. 1/30/98



VA/TN border
1/28/98



Best Western lobby
Coorsville, TN
1/29/98



Monterey, TN
1/29/98



Earle, AK
1/29/98



Panhandle, TX
1/30/98 Noon



rest stop
near McLean, TX
1/30/98



rest stop
west of Tucumacari, NM
1/30/98



Christina Billotté with a Thomas Campbell painting in the Best Western lobby, Coorsville, TN. 1/29/98



Christina Billotte with a Thomas Campbell painting in Truth or Consequences, NM at 8 AM. 1/31/98



Truth or Consequences,
NM
1/31/98 8AM



Rte. 26 NM
1/31/98



on Rte. 70
east of Safford, AZ
1/31/98



4th Ave. Tunnell
Tucson, AZ
2/1/98



Congress Hotel
Tucson, AZ
2/1/98



at a car wash
Los Angeles, CA
2/2/98



on Beachwood
Los Angeles, CA
2/3/98

Pink Planet



Christina Billotte with a Thomas Campbell painting on Rte. 70 east of Safford, AZ. 1/31/98



4th Avenue Tunnel Tucson, AZ 2/5/97

zines and ask them, "Do you know of anywhere cool to show photos in your town?"

Is that tour done now?

In the respect of moving from one place to another, it's done. The last show was at the ICA in London. I was thinking it would be really cool to have bands that were in the photos play a show with the photos in London. It was going to be Bluetip, but it just didn't work. It was too complicated. So finally, we got the ICA to do it and they had a movie theatre so we thought, "We should show movies!" So we showed James Schneider's film *Blue is Beautiful* and Guy Picciotto's films, and Jason Farrell's film. After that screening, James Schneider found a space to do the same thing in Ohio and the photos will hang there for like five weeks. On our Web page, I had something put up asking for someone who wants to hang it in DC, 'cause we would rather have it hang somewhere than sit in boxes. I think it will be in some bookstore this summer and then I was going to ask this new CD store if they wanted to hang it there for as long as they wanted.

Let's stop talking about touring your photos for a while and talk about the photos themselves. You had mentioned that you had gone to art school and finished that in '85 and basically stopped until '91. I was curious, what brought you to art school in the first place and what made you drop out—not necessarily drop out of school, but drop out of photography. And then finally, what made you come back to it later on.

I've always done art, even as a kid. I grew up in Los Angeles and my mom got a job in DC so we moved out here in 1981. It was a bad time for me because I was finishing 11th grade. I just decided—I don't know what the hell was on my mind—that I'd go to art school because there was an art school in DC. I didn't really make this huge decision, it was pretty nonchalant. I skipped 12th grade and went to art school for four years. I could have easily done something entirely different, but I went to art school and that totally burnt me out.

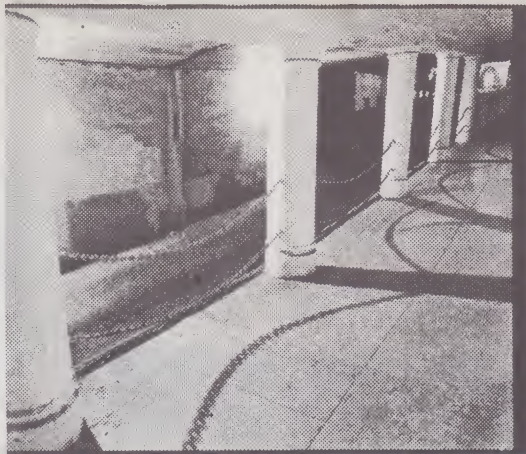
Why was that?

The first year you do everything; everybody does the same thing and then you decide what your major is. There were three majors: Photography, Graphic Design and Fine Art. I decided I would do Graphic Design because I figured I could actually get a job afterwards, which was a huge mistake. It was pre-computer era design, which is really fucking hard. Computers make it so easy it's stupid. It was tedious and long. You'd go to school for eight hours and then you'd be up for another eight to 10 hours every night doing homework. Art school totally took all my ideas about art and just threw them away. It just ruined art for me. By the end I couldn't do anything. I couldn't tell what I liked or what I was trying to do to get a good grade. I just stopped. When I started doing stuff again, it was because I had purged all the badness out of it.

And it took six years?

It took six years. This guy Ryan who's in the band Most Secret Method started going to the same school and he started not liking it. He was having





this huge dilemma and I told him not to go. If he could actually do what he wanted to do without going to art school, if he could actually kick his ass enough to do stuff and work on his art, then what's the point of going to school? I don't know if I had anything to do with his decision or anything, but he doesn't go to art school anymore.

And is he still doing his art?

Yeah, he's still doing his art, and that's good. Art school is a weird thing. Some people do need to go. I probably learned way more than I'd want to admit. Definitely I learned a lot about understanding aesthetics in general and composition and things like that. I think about it a lot, about how it's good that I went, but it did totally exhaust anything I was being inspired by for a really long time and I always wondered if the inspiration would ever come back and it did.

So what continues to inspire you?

Huh... That's a pretty tough one. Besides the people with their cars, I do all this other stuff; a lot of landscapes. I'm not exactly sure, but there's

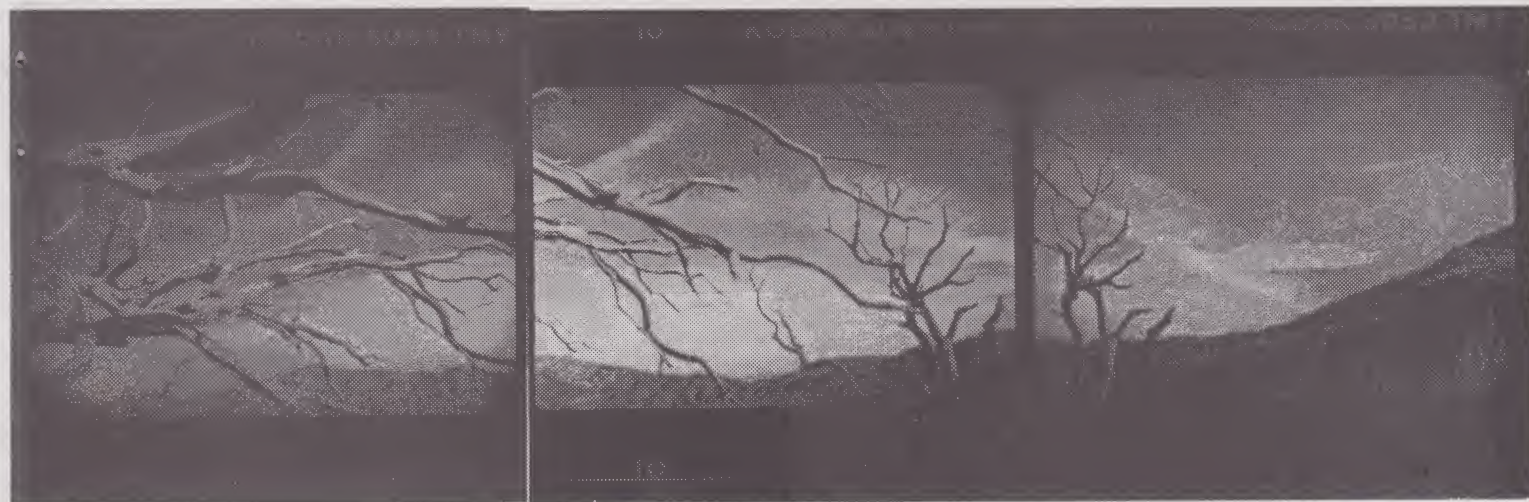
something I want to communicate with my photos and I haven't figured out what it is. I know what it is only in the feeling I get when I look at it. I can't explain what it is, but it's something that I constantly want to see and achieve that I can't explain it in words. That's what inspires me to keep on taking photographs.

Are you ever worried about being pigeonholed as "The woman who takes the car photos"?

It is kind of tedious, because people still ask for them. Somebody just asked me for them for some zine and I actually wrote 'em and said, "Don't you think this is getting really redundant? Doesn't everybody know about this? How much more can they see of it?" But maybe people haven't seen them... I don't know! For me, I've personally moved on. I do think it's fun to still take those sorts of photos, but it's not the same, it's a whole different thing. During the time that I was shooting the original photos, Slant 6 was together and Cupid Car Club was around and there was this short period of time where the music was really pretty fucking amazing. There was this really cool energy going around and I think it really is somehow in the original photographs. It's different now.

What made you want to move on from the people and their cars photos? What kind of need were they not filling creatively?

A lot of times I can't figure out why it is I'm attracted to something or why I want to take a photo of something or why I want to use an image for something. Sometimes it will be years later when I realize, "Oh yeah, that's why!" When the photos went to the ICA in London, there was an exhibit of work by a photographer named Bruce Webber and I went to go see it and it was totally amazing. I tried to understand what was so amazing about them because out of that context, I don't like all his photographs. I started to realize the reason that I liked it so much was because I was in London and I'd already been there for a week and a half and I was already yearning for American culture. I realized that I actually really love American culture and



Los Angeles Mountains, Los Angeles, CA 1/4/96



In Montana 7/97

Rte 10 & Rte. 146 in Arizona 2/3/97

A dog stretching for me in Dairy, WA 7/26/97

Near Glacier Park, Montana 7/29/97

I realized that I actually really love American culture and that's what I like to take photographs of.

that's what I like to take photographs of. I think that we've got a lot of really cool stuff. Where we live and the way this whole country is is pretty amazing. I think that things like skateboarding... Skateboarding to me is such a representation of something that was totally invented in the United States and exemplifies a type of energy that for whatever reason that—and this sounds so pro-American—Americans have. There's something we have that's because of where we live. The fact that you can get in a car and drive for three days or four days on a highway—in Europe, you can't do that so inexpensively and because of that I think people's art reflects that. American's culture reflects a lot of that. You get an energy from standing in big wide open spaces or confined spaces or whatever. I think that American culture expresses part of where we all live and it's great—that's what I like to take photographs of. I'm really into big wide open spaces and a lot of that is very American. I mean Australia has big wide open spaces, but that's there and I'm not. That's what I like to document. Because I was a girl, I never got to be involved in skateboarding culture. I grew up in Los Angeles and I really wanted to be involved in it, but it really just didn't work because guys were pretty much assholes—it was a guy culture thing—and it really bummed me out. It's the same with surfing. I think it's amazing. It turns out that most of the art I like was made by people who are surfers, which is totally by happenstance. There must be some kind of energy that's conveyed into their art. It's very punk rock, it's like they're doing their own thing and that's very American.

God Bless America. I'm curious, you made the move to DC when you were pretty young and also when the DC scene was pretty young. How do you feel that growing up around that scene, and having that scene grow up around you, has influenced what you do?

If I had stayed in LA, I would be doing something entirely different. I probably would have been in punk rock, but not in the same calibre that I am here. I'm glad that I moved away from LA. I always wonder what I would have ended up doing if I had stayed. I'm glad I moved here because

the energy from here is totally amazing. That's actually why I even bothered to do photography—I couldn't believe how amazing it was when I came here and I was stunned that nobody was taking photographs of anything! I tried to take photographs of it and I was pretty bad, I didn't know what the hell I was doing, but I wanted to take photographs of it. Ian seems to deny it at this point, but I thought that there was some kind of thing about if you were a photographer you were considered a geek in the scene. I was like, "I don't give a fuck man, you guys are crazy! Somebody's gotta take photos of this!" Around the same time I started, I think that Leslie Clague started taking photographs too and there were some other people so it was documented none the less. It doesn't account for much, but at the time in 1981 when I moved from LA to here, I wrote to *Flipside* and I asked them if they wanted me to sell their magazine. At that time, zines were only sold in the cities they were pretty much from. I would sell like 200 issues of *Flipside* here and in New York. A lot of people forget that in punk rock at that time—which contributed to the energy that it had—there weren't distributors and people didn't just buy the stuff, you had to prove to people to buy it in the first place.

The whole infrastructure that grew as a result of that is now just taken for granted.

It's totally taken for granted! People took the time and the energy to actually take stuff around and sell it, or a band would go on "tour," which was insane because nobody even knew what the hell it was when they would go on tour. That was totally inspiring to me at that time. We didn't even know what it really meant, we were doing it. This is going all the way back to the beginning of the interview with the art thing. In a way, it's happening again, but with art. Just doing something is such a great thing. If anybody gets inspired by something and creates things from that, it's such a great thing. That's the whole thing about the skater/surfer thing and the punk rock thing: You just do it. It's not waiting around for someone else to do it for you, and that's so inspiring to me. ©



HOUSE

INDUSTRIES

Interview by Darren Walters
Photos by Tim Owen



The language of type design has traditionally been spoken only by a few highly trained individuals. People steeped in the history and theory of design; people more interested in creating a “universal language” of ascenders and descenders, em-widths and x-heights than in creating something visually exciting. Because of this, the art of type design has remained out of public consciousness. Type’s inherent objective, according to design theory, is to be something that is seen but not actually noticed.

When type met the computer and the computer met the 1990s, everything changed. The '90s saw huge changes in type design, not all of them for the good of the art. All of a sudden, type was being deconstructed, distorted, rearranged, and reoriented. It seemed that for the first time, type moved to the forefront of design.

To be a designer during all of this was exciting, but frustrating. For all of the innovation in type design that was happening, one thing wasn’t changing: the attitude. All these type experiments were steeped in theory, in big ideas and long explanations. No type designer worth her mettle would admit that she was doing it just “cause it looked cool.”

That’s where House Industries turned the industry on its ear. House made type that looked cool for one reason: it was cool. Instead of drawing from design academia to justify their non-traditional type, the way most type designers of the early '90s did, House, along with a handful of other type foundries, turned to the invisible history—the real history—of American design. House typefaces were based on graffiti, on van art, on the lettering of pop culture artists like Ed “Big Daddy” Roth and Coop, on tiki bar menus and, most recently, on old hardcore & punk flyers. House typefaces were based on everyday objects and they made no apologies for it. Like the Sex Pistols did to music, House changed type design forever. —Dan Sinker



"I JUST WANTED TO BE EXCITED ABOUT COMING TO WORK EVERY DAY."

-Rich Roat



How did House Industries get started?

Rich Roat: Andy and I worked together at a small graphic design company in Wilmington and we got tired of working in that atmosphere, so we started a graphic design company called Brand Design. That was cool for a little while, but we really had trouble finding clients who would let us do our own thing—that's pretty much a cliché in the graphic design market—but we decided to stop bitching and do something about it, so we started designing these typefaces and sold them to the graphic design market. That sort of took off for a little bit and has helped us develop into a pretty decent-sized business.

Andy Cruz: Yeah, after working in the "real world" and seeing how lame that was, we decided to take a vow of poverty and try and take a stab at it and run up our credit cards and get things started. Rich and I had two Visa cards that we lived off of for the first four or five months. We stuck to our guns and it worked. I guess that's what attracted the Jeremy and Ken, and now Adam too.

Rich: I just wanted to be excited about coming to work every day. We work really hard and sometimes it's really frustrating dealing with things, but it's always really exciting. Every day something cool is coming over the fax or someone is calling you, and I think these guys are attracted by that excitement too and also attracted by that fact that we are really into maintaining the integrity of the work that we do. That's one of the biggest things that Andy and I strived for since the beginning of the company, was to maintain the integrity—we didn't want to compromise. To some extent, that is almost impossible, but we try and do the best we can. At least we have more control over that now than when we working for someone else.

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"SHIT, LET'S JUST GO AHEAD AND PACKAGE THE T-SHIRTS REAL PRETTY."

-Andy Cruz



Ken Barber: That was the biggest motivating factor for me to come to House Industries: the integrity of the work. Integrity is the toughest thing to find in the so-called "real" design world because there just seems to be such an incredible lack of it. When I decided to study art, I knew that I wanted to have a job where I enjoyed doing what I was doing. When I was working at my previous job, I realized that I wasn't so crazy about it, so that's when I decided to make the full-on commitment to House Industries.

What made you decide to expand from fonts and into other mediums?

Andy: It all started out because when you bought a font set from us you got a free shirt. We'd get calls from people who just wanted to buy the T-shirts, so we figured, "Shit, let's just go ahead and package the T-shirts real pretty." That kind of led to, "Let's develop these T-shirt into lines and make unique packaging for them too and try and get them into the hands of people who kind of relate to the culture surrounding the artwork we stole it from." [laughs]

Rich: The first real set of typefaces that we did was the "Bad Neighborhood" set—which was Jeremy's whole thing—with Crackhouse and all these other distressed typefaces. We developed a whole kit based on that. The Bad Neighborhood set came out so cool and Andy was collecting Rat Fink models and Ed Roth models from the '60s so we said, "Let's do this thing called the Rat Fink Fonts." We went to the extent of licensing the name from Ed Roth, who created Rat Fink, and we printed a box that looked like an old Revell model box. So we were selling these things and it was cool and all these people were getting it who had no idea what a font was and were saying, "God, we like this!" But we were selling that thing for \$150, because that was sort of the going rate that we could sell a set of fonts for. We wanted to make something that we could mass market and that was affordable so that anybody from anywhere could buy, so we started coming out with these T-shirt lines.

What about the other font sets you've done?

Andy: As Rich said, the first set that we came up with was the Bad Neighborhood set, and that was pretty much our own original deal. The next thing was the Rat Fink stuff, which Ken drew all of the type for, but it was based on stuff that Big Daddy had done in the '60s for his models, cars and T-shirts. But rather than just take it, we felt like we had to credit the source and show where we got the inspiration from. After that, we did the Street Van set, which again was our own original lettering, but it was based on our favorite '70s type that we found in the back of Hot Rod or Car Craft. For that set, we did a little fold up van that made a cool little package. From there, we decided to do this set with Coop and base all the type on lettering that he does for his

"IF PEOPLE FEEL TRAPPED BY WHAT THEY ARE DOING, THEY SHOULD GET OUT OF IT." -Rich Roth



posters. The reason we were attracted to Coop's artwork is because he's really one of the only guys out there besides ourselves and a handful of other people who are still drawing type by hand. Most people are not going to take the time to actually sit down and draw it or sketch it out and refine it. It's one of those things where it's sort of a little art history lesson, if you will, that we are sending out to other designers and ad agencies to say, "Hey look, this is a cool genre! Check this out and buy our fonts so we can continue to keep putting more stuff out."

How easy was it to get the artist's cooperation?

Andy: With Roth, I'm sure it was a leap of faith. We sent out some of the other work that we were doing for other clients and I think that he saw the integrity and the amount of effort that we put into the projects. Also, fortunately for us, Roth is a real computer geek—which really surprised us—so he was really into it. When we finished that font set, people associated us with Ed Roth, which was a good thing for a while, but now it's the kind of thing where we want to lose that image. As much as we want to work with artists whose stuff we like, we have a lot of talent here that, unfortunately, we are probably not utilizing that well. We're considering doing one more font set with a "celebrity" artist, but that will probably be the last one that we do.

Do you consider yourself more of a type foundry or a design house?

Andy: Well, it's hard to put a label on it just because it seesaws so much between us developing our own products and then trying to have the luxury of picking and choosing what commercial work we want to take on, which again, is based on our current financial situation and how much stress we want.

Rich: When people ask us what we are, I sometimes say that we are a creative collective.

Jeremy Dean: Everybody sees the T-shirts, then they see the font sets, then they see the design work, and it comes off schizophrenic. It's like, "What's going on?" But it represents everything that interests us.

Let's talk a little about the two most recent font sets, the Tiki Type and Flyer Font sets, which both contain music as well as type. How did those come about?

Rich: What it came from first was the realization of, "Wow, this font set is going to ship on three disks. How are we going to do that and save some money?" So I thought that we should do a CD-ROM. So then we thought, "Hey, if we do a CD-ROM, we can do a CD too!" That's where the whole music side came from.

Andy: We called Estrus Records and told them that it would be a promotion for them too if songs from some of their bands were included on the Tiki font set. Dave at Estrus was really into it—he's a consistent House Industries customer—and also one of the few people who uses our type the way it should be. I told him that we were doing the Tiki project and it was going to be full-blown, that we were doing all of these original paintings, a T-shirt line that would help promote it and that the fonts were going to be put on a CD and would he be interested in loaning us some music. He said, "Sure, why don't you just go through our catalog and make a list of what you want and I'll get in touch with the bands." I faxed him out a list and he got in touch with the bands, and the bands

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surprisingly knew who we were and were really amped up about getting on board. Next thing we knew, it was all taken care of and all we had to do was give Estrus a couple of Tiki fonts. It went off without a hitch, and as far as I know he's pretty psyched on it and we're really happy about how it came out.

What about the Flyer fonts?

Rich: It's sort of the same deal with those as the Tiki Fonts. Jeremy started doing those and all of the sudden he's got 18 of them and I'm like, "Jesus Christ, what are we going to do with all of these?" And the Tiki thing worked so well that I figured that we might as well do a CD again so Jeremy just got on the horn for months....

Jeremy: ...with some help from other people too. We had the idea to do the fonts and then I was thinking about whether people would understand where they came from. So I wanted all of the bands that relate to the flyers from which the type came from to be represented on the CD. This will go out to big ad agencies where people have never heard the stuff before and maybe they don't care where they came from and they just want to use the fonts because they look cool, but at least with the music, the flyers, and the

type, it gives a nice history. Everything comes together to represent where this stuff originates. So when someone looks at this thing and is like, "Circle Jerks, who the hell is that," we help to put it all in context.

Rich: And the type is cool just like any of our sets. We could have gone and been inspired by the lettering of Big Daddy Roth and done a set of fonts called something else and just made them new fonts for House Industries and not credit the source, but that's not what we're about. I think that is where we get criticized a lot too. People will say, "Oh, that's not new. I've seen that before in the '60s, that's not original." Well crap, graphic design is not original! I'm sorry. I don't know any graphic designers out there doing original art. At least we're going back and letting people know where it came from. And that's what Jeremy did. If you look at the Flyer Fonts, you'll see the font and the flyer where we boosted it from. That's kind of what we're all about: being authentic, giving credit to the source, putting our twist on it and making it better—or at least better in our eyes.

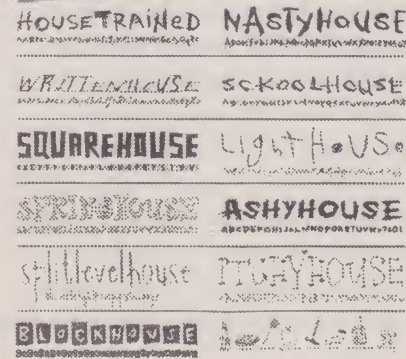
Jeremy: All of the type on those flyers is unintentional. It was done by anyone who had access to a photocopier, scissors and some glue. That sort



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of rough, cut-up looking thing wasn't so cool at the time, but it has aged well. Especially since now that all of the hardcore flyers are really bad computer-generated flyers, crappy looking junk. You don't want to collect them; you see them and you don't want to take them home. You want to know when the show will be, but then you don't want to hold on to it. I think the art of flyers is kind of a lost art.

Obviously you're not just a normal type foundry. You put a lot of effort into the packaging, the artwork and the "big picture."

Jeremy: There's a lot of qualities involved in keeping it "authentic" and at the same time interesting. You're not just buying one font, you get a whole package. Usually when you buy a font, you get a disk...

Andy: ...or you get it delivered over the Internet....

Jeremy: ...and you spend all of this money and you don't really get anything for it. With us, you're getting a whole thing to be excited about.

Rich: We give you the resource material and the typeface. What happened a lot with the Bad Neighborhood fonts was that Jeremy had taken some type and distressed it a little on a copier and used it for all of the copy, all of the collateral on the box, and people were like, "We want the font that's on the box." And it was like, "Well, you just type using such and such a font and then distress it a little bit on a copier," Their response most of the time was, "Well, can you do that for us?" The font kits were a lot of value for your money because you got the fonts, but we also showed you how to use them.

Ken: I think what sets House Industries apart from what you might call our "contemporaries" is that our contemporaries tend to design for other designers or they sort of focus on the design community itself or people who are just into fonts or whatever. But we take our fonts from our own personal interests and then sort of bring that into the design work that we are doing and the typefaces that we are developing. You can see that in the Tiki Type and the Flyer Fonts—they come from our personal interests. We find a way that we can fuse the two together—our jobs and what else we like to do. I think that's what sets us apart from other people doing typefaces and design.

What do you say to those people who feel like there's no way they could give up their job to pursue their dreams?

Andy: That's just a call that you have to make. I mean, Rich and I had to make that decision. I could quit now and get a real job and make lots of money, like 50 to 80 grand a year, but it's probably the type of thing where you couldn't wait to get home to escape doing lame shit all day.

Rich: What I say to those people is "Who is holding a gun to your head?" If people feel trapped by what they are doing, they should get out of it.

Ken: So many people want us to peddle their fonts for them, and it's not that we don't want to help other people out, but I think that we just try and give them the same advice that we follow ourselves: Do it for yourself. That's where you're going to find the satisfaction. ©

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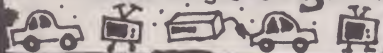
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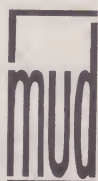
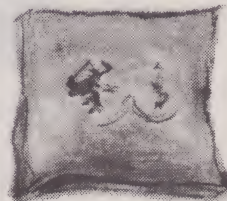
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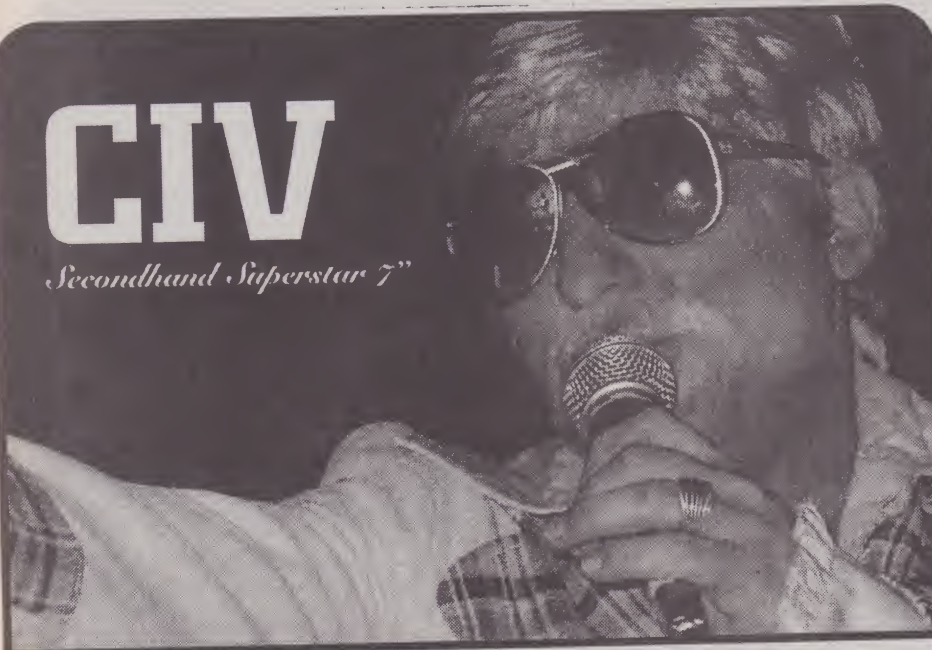
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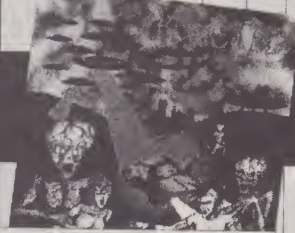
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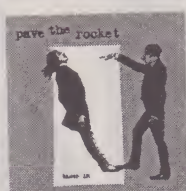
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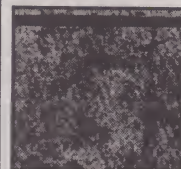
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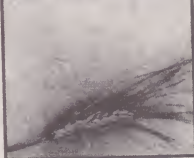


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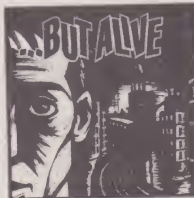
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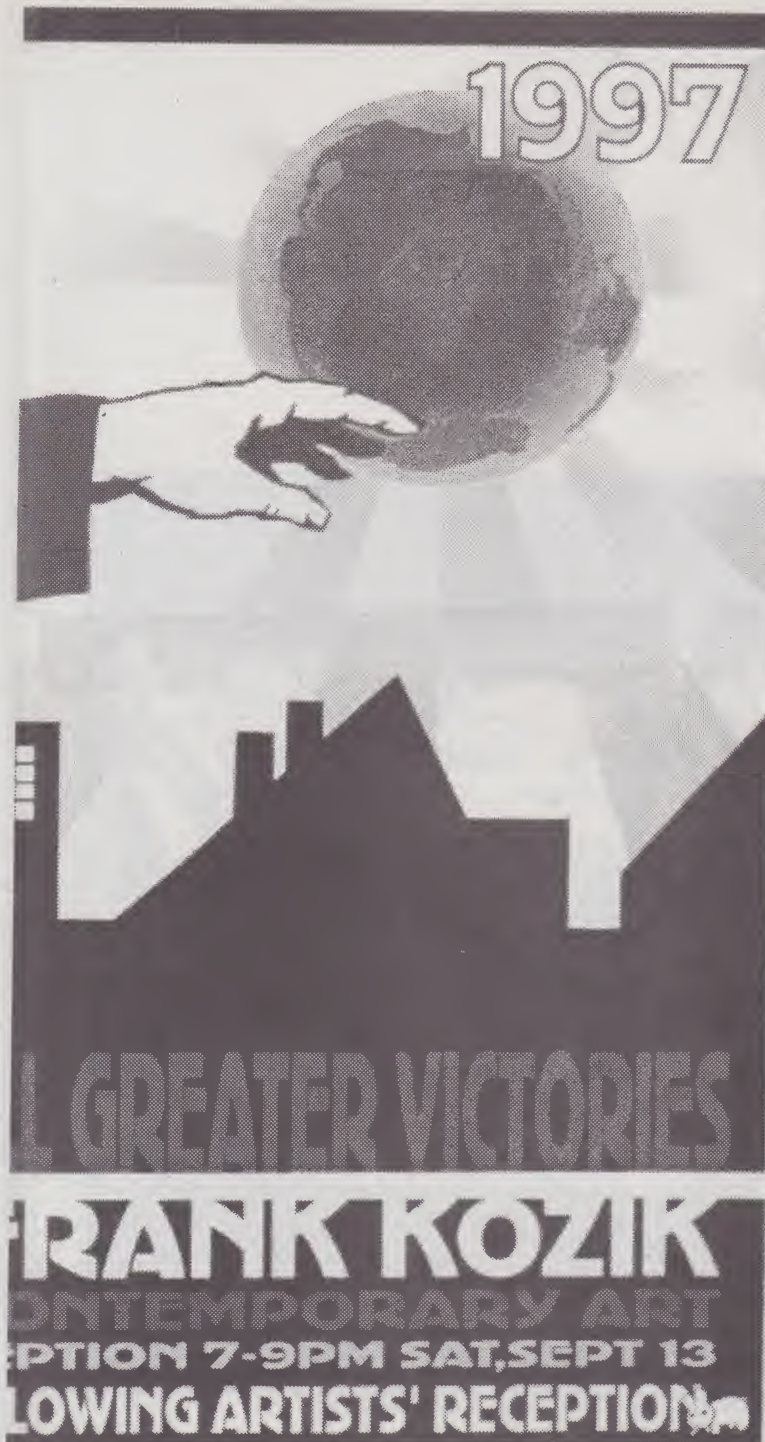
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But is it Art?

Reading the posters—and the press pack—of Frank Kozik
by Dan Sinker



Frank Kozik's press pack is thick enough to choke a horse. When it arrived at my door disguised, as it was, in a FedEx envelope, I thought that I had been sent a volume of the encyclopedia, or a mail bomb, or a bunch of wadded up newspaper. Upon opening it, however, I discovered that in a way, Kozik had sent me all three.

Reading through the four-inch-high stack of articles is not unlike looking at the odd juxtapositions of Kozik's posters that couple the pedestrian with the shocking. There is no priority given to glossy bios or cut & paste zines; no privilege given to "accepted" news sources over those that are marginalized. *Newsweek* articles are sandwiched between interviews in zines like *Your Flesh* and *Ben Is Dead*; *The New York Times* weighs in with their opinions right before *Hustler's* junior-high-school-essay-masquerading-as-a-profile; the Kozik *Rolling Stone* interview gets stuck after a five question single page interview in *Culture Rag* zine. In Kozik's press packet, highbrow butts up against lowbrow; smart meets stupid.

Kozik's posters work the same way. As he rather humbly explains, "I'm entirely self-taught and basically untalented, hence the 'appropriation' technique." While Kozik may downplay his technique, his posters are fluorescent proof of his talent. Just as his press pack doesn't differentiate between the "acceptable" and the "unacceptable," neither does Kozik's art. His work seems to tap into the unconscious—the dreams—of America in the late 20th century. His best work appropriates good dreams (particularly of the wet variety) and nightmares and melds them together into a Technicolor cartoon world that is both seductive and off-putting. In the alternate universe depicted in Kozik's posters the Flintstones eat out of a garbage can in a back alley, cute chipmunks shoot really big guns, girls take their giant bugs out for walks and the devil wants a little action before taking your soul. It's a world silkscreened in bold colors; fluorescents and metallics play a major role in Kozik's color palette. He may not think much of it, but Kozik's self-described "appropriation technique," judging from the number of articles sitting in front of me right now, has been unbelievably successful.

It's important to note that the magazines writing about Kozik almost directly reflect the three cultures his posters draw their imagery most directly from: the mainstream, the underground and the porn world. Leafing through Kozik's press pack and being hit full-on with a cover of *Hawk* where Kozik's work ("Art From Hell") is billed equally with such standard porno fare as "College Cooze, the guide to getting laid on campus" was off-putting at first. But the more I thought about it, the more it made sense. Kozik's art is about the contradictions and juxtapositions of 20th century life. Inherent in that is the overwhelming puritan nature of America (particularly when it comes to politics) and its flipside: the huge pornography industry. Kozik incorporates sex imagery in a lot of his posters (as he put it in an interview in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Naked is good.") and because of this it makes sense that he would agree to appear in porn mags for the same reason that he'd agree to be interviewed in *Punk Planet*: he's giving back to the community from which he gets his inspiration.

The same can be said for his appearances in mainstream rags. Popular culture is so important in Kozik's work that to snub the very mouthpieces of this culture would seem wrong. That said, the recognition that Kozik has garnered from these sources was surprising to me. Not because he doesn't deserve it—there are few visual artists working in the '90s that have been as influential as Kozik—but because he has achieved his success with virtually no help from the fine art establishment. Traditionally, mainstream magazines and newspapers like *Newsweek* and the *New York Times* are only going to write about art when they've already gotten the thumbs up from art establishment



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"In Europe, they see my work in a highly political context and deconstruct it in a very heavy way,"

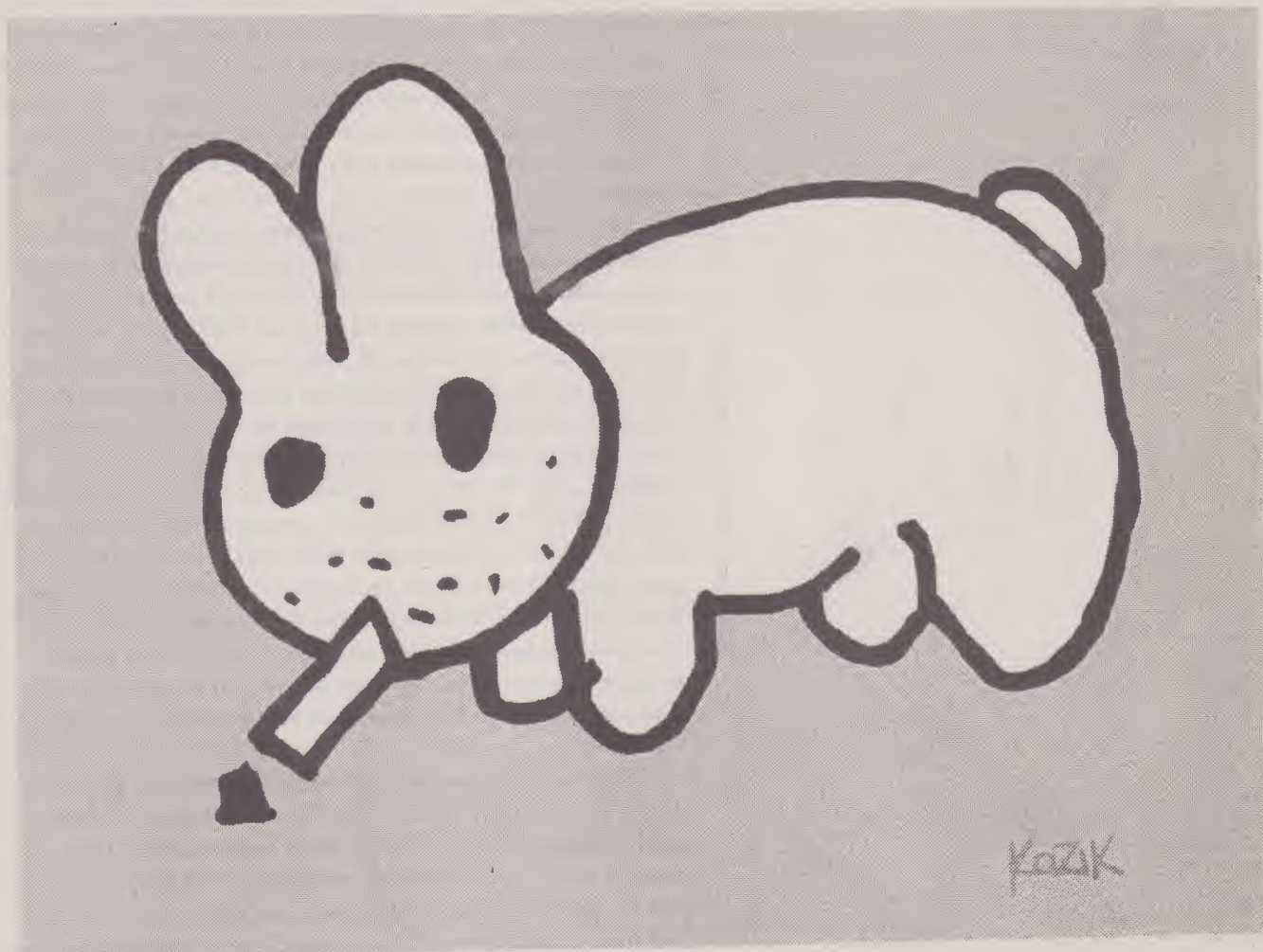
magazines like *Art Forum* and *Art in America*. But this approval is conspicuously absent from Kozik's press pack. In fact, it isn't there at all. It's as if in the American art scene, Kozik doesn't even exist. In that scene, his work is "low-brow and definitely considered trash," confides Kozik. But the feeling, it would seem, is mutual. "Most art school people I know talk a lot and don't do much," he says, "plus it seems to cost an awful lot. I tend not to interact with them very much because they usually think what I do is shit and are resentful of my so-called 'success.'"

It's in his disdain for the "high" art world where Kozik's punk roots really show through. The few times when the art world does come off its high horse to acknowledge Kozik, he's usually classified as an "outsider" artist—a catch-all term thrown around the art world to define virtually anyone working without a hundred thousand dollars of art school behind them—or a "pop" artist—a term that is basically meaningless in the 1990s. But Kozik doesn't seem to care that much. "I am into 'hands-on'... You can take 'theory' and stuff it."

The art establishment's ignorance, however, seems to be a uniquely American phenomenon. "In Europe, they see my work in a highly political context and deconstruct it in a very heavy way," Kozik explains. His acceptance in Europe, where the poster has a rich and lengthy history and plays a still-important role in day-to-day life, makes sense. In fact, it is Kozik's own link to Europe that may explain his interest in the poster medium in the first place. Born in Madrid, Spain in 1962, Kozik was exposed to the idea of the poster as a public forum. As he explains in an interview in *Ben Is Dead*, "Madrid is a large city. It's a city like New York with maybe only three or four million people living in it and maybe 12 newspapers. Here, every town's got like *one* newspaper and if you want to know what's going on you look in the paper, right? Well over there, it's not like that, it's structured so you're dependent on what you see on the street. Posters are the method they use to transcend class boundaries. Somebody can't afford to advertise in 20 different newspapers, but you can put up posters and *everybody* sees the poster, whereas maybe only a certain kind of person would buy the newspaper you wanted to advertise in."

While European posters may have supplied the initial idea and basic design sensibilities for Kozik's art, the role of the poster in recent American history definitely provided the message for his medium. Like in Europe, American posters have historically functioned as voices of dissent. But it is a different type of dissent—cultural dissent. I don't mean to downplay the importance of political posters in voicing opposition to governmental policies, but it is important to realize that punk culture, just like the hippies and beats before it, is legitimate dissension in its own right. It is a dissension against mainstream culture; of the status quo; of simple acceptance of what the prevailing opinions tell you to accept. And the rallies of this cultural dissent take the form of concerts. It's also important to remember that cultural dissent in the fashion of concerts has produced the most posters; in America, the number of posters produced in the name of politics is dwarfed by the number produced in the name of rock 'n' roll. After all, it was the psychedelic posters announcing concerts by bands like the Grateful Dead that virtually coined the term "poster art."

While made for different reasons than in Europe, the reasoning behind producing posters here in America remained the same: advertising in a newspaper is prohibitively expensive for most underground promoters and probably wouldn't even reach the right people anyway. It makes the most sense to make up flyers and posters and put them where you know people will see them: the street. Beyond the fluorescent colors, busty women and smiling bunnies taking hits off bongos, Kozik's posters are still continuing this tradition.



609.400

While other poster artists charge hefty sums for their prints, Kozik keeps his costs affordable. A typical Kozik poster—signed and numbered—costs between \$15 and \$25.

Kozik got his start making flyers “back in the heyday of the Texas punk scene.” He was friends with a lot of people in bands and they ended up recruiting him to make flyers. But, “it wasn’t about art,” Kozik is quick to point out, “but more along the vein of being part of a scene and pissing people off and having a joke.” Which is, Kozik asserts, pretty much exactly what he’s doing almost 20 years later.

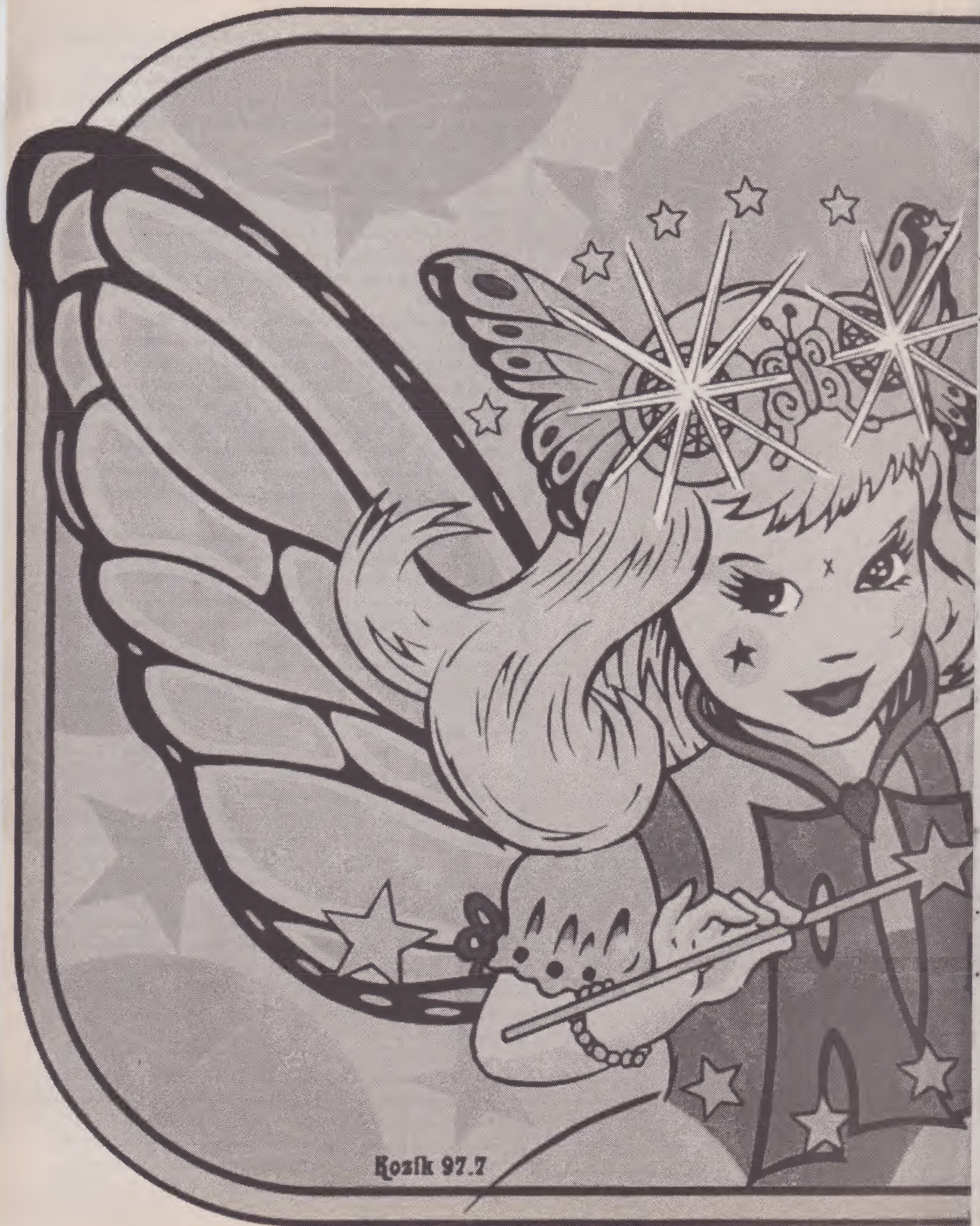
If that’s true, then the joke is on a whole lot of people. Despite the art elite’s snubbing of Kozik, he has still managed to get a number of gallery shows over the years—his press pack includes clippings of advertisements, reviews and press releases from at least a dozen different shows. More impressively, there is a collection of his posters in the Smithsonian. “That was pretty strange,” confesses Kozik. And despite it all he “still cannot think of it as ‘Art’, maybe just fun...”

Kozik’s pursuit of “fun” compels him to make over 100 posters a year in addition to doing design work, illustration work, and running his own record label, Man’s Ruin Records. It is also this pursuit of “fun” that has found Kozik applying his punk-honed talents on work for such corporate clients as Nike and Gatorade. While it could be seen as “selling out” to do this, Kozik is quick to point out that the money he made from Nike paid for a 15 color silkscreen press that he uses to make posters for bands that may draw only 100 people and that the Gatorade money has been put right back into his record label. Once again, Kozik uses the products of popular culture to fuel the counterculture.

Kozik’s respect for the counterculture manifests itself in another important way: prices. While other poster artists charge hefty sums for their prints, Kozik keeps his costs affordable. A typical Kozik poster—signed and numbered—costs between \$15 and \$25. Kozik’s competition—and imitators—typically charge significantly more than that. The work put into his posters certainly qualifies them for higher prices. Silkscreening is tedious, time consuming work. Each color on a poster requires its own screen and must be applied one screen at a time on a single poster. A 15 color poster in a typical Kozik run of 600 means that someone’s got to swipe a squeegee 6000 times!

As a result of his workaholic sensibilities, not all of his work is great. As with many prolific artists, when Kozik’s work is on, it’s groundbreaking; but when his work is off, it’s equally as bad. But this is to be expected. Kozik’s posters operate as his sketchbook. He’ll try out a number of visual styles and those that work tend to become another weapon in his arsenal while those that don’t tend to get left at the wayside. Kozik’s work is especially weak when he moves away from his signature line art style and uses photographic elements. When working in this style, his bold color choices are less effective, his technique of combining disparate images seems forced and, the overall design of the poster just seems less dynamic. It’s as if Kozik is so taken in by the richness of a photograph that he completely forgets his own strengths as an artist. Of course, Kozik’s insistence that he’s not making art makes it hard to critique it as such—which may be part of the reason he does it. If it’s just for fun, anything goes.

Reading through his press pack, his “it’s not art” theme is repeated literally hundreds of times; not a single article, be it in the *Times* or *Hawk* fails to mention how he’s “not making art.” As he explained to me, “all the classifications are basically wrong because in reality, I have *no idea* what it is I am doing.” It may be true—it probably is true, but no matter how many times he insists that it isn’t, what Kozik is doing *is* art. And culture—both of the mainstream and counter varieties—is better off for it. ©



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Cultural Manipulations

Graphic design and the punk rock professional.

By **Matt Owens** (matt@volumeone.com)



I have been into punk and design for a good 12 years now and, at 26, I can see very clearly the lineage that has taken me from a 14-year-old kid silkscreening shirts in my backyard to starting my own graphic design company, Volumeone (www.volumeone.com), this past September. For me, being involved in music has always been fundamental to my interest in design. Ever since I was very young, I have been into art and drawing. Like many teenage punk kids in the late '80s, all I was doing was skateboarding and listening to records. As I got more into punk, my twin brother Mark and I got a radio show at the local college radio station, and we ended up making stickers and flyers and even shirts for our friends. We played all the cool DC stuff as well as DI, Uniform Choice, Crass, the Descendents, and other punk stuff from past and the then late '80s present.

I think it was around 1988 when it dawned on me. I was sitting in my room with my favorite records from the last few years around me. All of these records together created an aesthetic and aural family that became the embodiment of a moment for me. They were me at 17 in a small Texas town with one cool record store and a mini ramp in my backyard. I thought to myself, "This is what I want to do, I want to make zines and record covers and have them be as cool as this." I don't think I had really ever heard of graphic design at this point, but I knew this was so much cooler than just drawing pictures on book covers or out of magazines.

In 1989 I moved to Austin, Texas to go to college. That summer I enrolled early and worked hard to pass my classes so I could actually stay in school. In the dorms, they had computer labs (Mac SE 30s) and I was totally into writing papers and printing out words to paste up flyers and things. I became an art

major, and for the better part of two years I drew lots of naked people; it was cool, but it got boring after a while. In the course catalog I saw that you could get a BA with a focus in graphic design instead of a BFA, so in my sophomore year I transferred to the design department.

During this same time all of these great things seemed to be happening in punk: Fugazi hit it big and for the first time I began to really notice the fresh design style coming from the likes of Jason Farrell, Chris Bald and Jeff Nelson in DC, as well as the East Bay visuals of John Yates (Allied) and Sergie from Samiam.

I was so excited, but I wasn't in a band, and it seemed to me that to do this cool stuff you had to be affiliated with one. As my computer skills improved and I learned the rudiments of Photoshop and QuarkXPress, I began to typeset stuff for local bands' flyers and record covers. Basically my friends would come in and would have something sketched on a piece of paper and I would try to replicate it. "Can you make it bigger?" "Can you squish the text so this all fits?" My friends had their own ideas, and since I was so inexperienced, I just did what they wanted. I had not really thought about design "authorship," and I was not in a position to do what I wanted. The bulk of my undergraduate years were spent in this capacity, and while I always admired the records I thought were designed well, my design classes remained fairly traditional—your basic typographic studies, learning about the swiss grid (upon which most corporate design in the '60s and '70s has been based), and formal examinations of text image relationships. It didn't make sense—The way they taught design, it seemed like the awesome looking records I was collecting and this "profes-



sion" they were teaching had nothing to do with each other. And yet I knew inherently that they did.

"My T-shirt, it shows everything."

One of my professors, Diane Gromala, was in her late 20s and considered herself a savvy hipster that was down with the kids. I told her I was into punk rock, but not the Sex Pistols—stuff that is new and that she had never heard of. She said, "Well, if you are into youth culture, then you should read this book," and handed me *Subculture, The Meaning of Style* by Dick Hebdige. The book is about the emergence of youth culture, primarily in postwar Britain. For Hebdige, the reason anyone affiliates herself with a certain subcultural group is to be distinct from the dominant culture. This segmentation into "groups" or "cliques" is a natural outgrowth of a need to belong that comes with adolescence. Subcultures take this need for identity and extend it to the point of a need to reject cultural "normalization." This need encompasses both the music, dress, and habits that make up a subculture. After reading Hebdige, I realized—in an overt way—why punk meant so much to me: It made me feel unique. The records, the music, the shoes, the T-shirts, the lyrics—the visual and aural phrases contained in these various cultural "codes"—combined to form, as Hebdige explained, a "symbolic violation of the social order."

These cultural codes, in the form of sounds, images, objects, words, and letters are what serve as the building blocks from which subcultures are created. And I realized that as a graphic designer, you manipulate these cultural codes to create or elicit meaning. Visualize a straightedge hardcore record circa 1988, a jazz record circa 1965, an English punk record circa 1979, even a Gravity

release circa 1993-94. In our mind's eye, there are general codes that embody each of these genres of music in visual form. Musically there are sound codes that are distinct to these genres, as well as codes of dress and manner. Today, within so-called postmodern culture, the layering of these codes is becoming more and more complex.

It is this desire to "thread the needle" between the recognizable codes of the past to create new genres and codes that serves as the very foundation of (sub)cultural formation. Be it music, fashion, or graphic design, these same mechanisms are at play. When we look at objects and listen to sounds, it is the subtlety of the code manipulations within the artifact that give it value and recognizability. Within the punk/hardcore scene, knowing the codes of a certain subgenre is what ostensibly separates the "cool" kids from the kids that just don't get it.

Moreover, punk as a subculture lends itself to design appropriation (or pastiche) now more than ever before. From the Reid Miles (Blue Note) appropriation on the recent Jeune/Jimmy Eat World split 7" to the clip art and press-on letter vernacular that has become the staple of the Vermiform aesthetic, punks are constantly working to raid from the visual codes of the past and present to create the new. In this post-Macintosh era, I think the merging of punk ideology and design "process" is a natural one. Kids are smarter and are hungry for more intelligent and sophisticated cultural experiences. Design methodology—the awareness and manipulation of cultural codes through words and images and sounds—forms the building blocks for these new dialogues to come to life. The difficulty comes when trying to retain a separation between the subculture with which you affiliate yourself and the culture at large.



In September of 1993, I went to graduate school at Cranbrook Academy of Art where I learned about the insular and incestuous world of professional and academic graphic design. Like punks, designers are very enclosed, forming their own small factions that battle for recognition through technical skill, specialized vocabularies, and attitude. For two years I worked hard to learn design history, experimenting with different media and getting my head together as to what I wanted to be doing. The DIY attitude I enjoyed so much within punk inspired me to keep doing my own stuff. I kept designing and silk-screening record covers while working to become part of the professional design "scene" as well.

What was interesting for me to realize during this period was the complete separation between "professional" designers and "punk" designers within the academy. Although their work is easily as impressive and "legitimate," people like Jason Farrell or John Yates were unknown to the professional design crowd. Even the coolest of designers in the professional sphere were pretty much into traditional lifestyles and looked forward to careers at a big agency or a small firm.

However, there are a few professional designers that have a "fuck the system" attitude that I admire. Among them are Elliott Earls and *Emigre*. Elliott Earls graduated from Cranbrook in 1993 and started his own company, The Apollo Program, making posters and designing fonts for sale. To many kids like me, he is a legend, one of the few designers out there that is successfully working on his own terms. *Emigre* magazine, founded by Rudy Vanderlans in 1984 [interviewed in *Punk Planet* #7], started right on the cusp of the Macintosh revolution and in many ways is the graphic design

community's first DIY success story. In the late '80s and early '90s, *Emigre* served as the visual forum for graphic experimentation and brought many then-unknown designers to the attention of the mass market.

Punk and the creative commodity

The early '90s saw the advent of "alternative" music and mainstream magazines like *Raygun* and *Bikini* that utilized "radical" typographic and design techniques. Suddenly, within the professional design community, a subcultural affiliation allowed one access to unknown pleasures creating "kick ass" and commercially successful design for popular culture. Many designers turned toward the idiosyncratic and hocked their cool visual style for fast cash on the MTV, VH1, and alterna-mag circuit.

Although the success of this "alternative" visual style certainly is the most obvious, and prevalent example of the mainstream's co-option of (sub)cultural visual language, the last 10 to 15 years have witnessed many instances of this gradual merging of youth (sub)culture and professional culture. Back in the "cut-and-paste" heyday of punk you had designers like Jamie Reid who basically created the "ransom note" lettering style of the Sex Pistols. Today you have American design heroes like the aging surfer David Carson (former designer of *Beach Culture*, *Transworld Skateboarding*, and *Raygun*). Both Reid and Carson share similar success stories: both attained fame through a subcultural context. Without punk rock or skateboarding, Reid and Carson respectively would not have become famous. But the converse can also be argued. Jeff Nelson, Jason Farrell, or Chris Bald are a bit different in the fact they are not famous



(by your Happy Meal popular culture standards) but they did give Dischord an "identity" and by extension the DC musical genre without seeing that same visual style become co-opted.

After getting out of grad school in 1993, I worked at several Internet companies on the East and West coasts. I was, and continue to be, totally into the Web—for me it's like cable access or ham radio—a digital fanzine. I remember back in the day ("back in the day on the web being just two years ago) when Underdog and Intrrr Nrrrd were the only punks on the Net. Now, you can get price quotes from Erik Astor at Furnace via email and check out interviews at Rocket Fuel (www.rocket-fuel.com), and even get accurate tour information on a plethora of label's & band's sites.

With companies like Apartment 13, The Collection Agency, and my own Volumeone, you have punk kids creating "professional" design firms. I think this development has everything to do with the control of cultural production (the codes). There is an entrepreneurial spirit implicit in the DIY mentality that has characterized much of the punk subculture, and by starting a design company a designer can have control over his or her own destiny. Some kids start bands, labels, distros, clubs, or magazines—others start design firms. As punk kids move from young adulthood and college into the professional sphere and struggle to retain some sense of cultural "otherness," it seems only natural to take one's destiny into one's own hands. It is this struggle, between punk ideology and "working for the man," that is the most difficult to negotiate as you get into your mid 20s.

No doubt, negotiating the space between corporate clients and punk rock subculture is difficult when you run your own business. Ask various full-time label

and distro owners if it is easy making a living off of purely punk endeavors. It is not. As a designer, the issue of context serves as the point of departure between contributing to and helping create a subculture (through designing fanzines, record covers, flyers etc.), and being a "skill for hire" to the rest of the commercial world. One must retain a professional distance and rely on one's ideological foundations and skill to act as a filter between the commercial and the subcultural. This places oneself standing on the edge looking outward, working the cultural codes to use one world (the commercial) to benefit the other (the subcultural)—and not the other way around. The ideological paradigms that punk rock instills within an individual can be the strongest guiding principles when you get out there on your own. In the end the only thing you really have is your ability to keep on doing it, to be consistent and see things through. Always try to create the best stuff you can, and don't settle for less. Don't be a hypocrite, stick to your ideological guns, and if you are going to do it, do it for the long haul. ©



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THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION OF OUR TIME

Since the dawn of the Reagan era, when a new wave of cultural and political conservatism swept over America, one of the most important ideologies which ascended to public prominence was the desire to scale back the welfare state, the role of the government in enforcing civil rights legislation and the spending of tax dollars on funding Federally-sponsored cultural programs such as the National Endowment for the Arts. All of these laws and programs were products of what is commonly referred "the era of big government," which, the theory goes, no longer exists because the free market has shown that it can perform the same egalitarian function that the state once did. Now that we are well into the second term of the Clinton era, the conservative economic and cultural logic which fueled the Reagan revolution of the 1980s appears largely unabated. Like punk, conservative anti-statism has gone mainstream.

Beginning in the early '80s, the newly elected Republican government became very sensitive to right-wing calls for the dismantling of the National Endowment for the Arts, a still-young federal agency with a fairly large budget, which saw its mandate as being to promote an indigenous American culture by providing public funding for arts education programs in public schools and deserving artists who could not find sufficient private resources to subsidize their work.

During the first years of the Reagan administration, when federal subsidies for a variety of government-funded programs ranging from mental health care all the way to public education started to get progressively cut, secular and religious conservatives allied with Reagan inaugurated a culture war to accompany the Republican Party's conservative political and economic program of downsizing. Initially this campaign took the form of preventing such small-time targets as suburban convenience stores from being allowed to carry magazines as diverse as *Hustler*, *Circus* and *Tiger Beat* because of the kind of affront to traditional religious morality such literature supposedly contained. But by going after such empty straw men proved to be practically ineffective because the results were largely symbolic. Pointing out the fake subversive potential of morally impotent, mainstream cultural icons only served to delegitimize the new religious piety in the eyes of the apathetic American public. Something legislative was needed in order to raise their ire.

By the mid-'80s, Christian and neo-conservative cultural activists began pressuring congressional leaders into forcing the music business to put warning stickers on to the covers of records with supposedly objectionable, non-Christian content. All of these cultural initiatives were for the most part successful, insofar as they forced the government into acknowledging the strength and power of conservative Christian lobbyists. But creating such legally sanctioned prohibitions on cultural consumption only served to enhance the market value of those commodities rejected as immoral by the new Religious Right. The government couldn't stop private businesses like Warner Music from pressing Slayer albums because that would have amounted to censoring a firm which provided a great deal of cultural legitimation for the Reagan presidency through its immense media network. While largely ineffective in achieving their stated purpose, such initiatives did succeed in creating a cultural climate more hospitable and welcoming to religious concerns.

***ARTIFICIAL ART OFFICIALS**
(THE CULTURAL MYTHS OF THE NEW STATE)

BY JOEL SCHALIT

In 1988, the Reverend Donald Wildmon of the American Family Association found the right target that would push the new Christian cultural revolution into its next phase of delegitimizing the official culture of the old liberal welfare state: The National Endowment for the Arts. For every Chippewa Wig Wam display in town halls in northern Wisconsin and every Appalachian quilt exhibit it sponsored in Amish communities in southern Pennsylvania, the NEA was found to subsidize cultural artifacts which really did subvert traditional religious definitions of heterosexual citizenship. For the first time, conservatives had found an effective target-artists given money by the state who created work which they could legitimately argue contradicted mainstream American cultural sensibilities.

The whole thing started with the NEA's sponsorship of a traveling exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe's homoerotic photography in Washington DC, followed by a similar installation at the Corcoran Gallery in Cincinnati. This, the religious right argued, amounted to a symbolic federal condoning of homosexuality. Such state-sanctioned endorsements of alternative sexual orientations did not conform with the ideal vision of the new sexual culture of the emerging post-industrial economy, which would of course be culturally defined by Christians. After a great deal of public controversy, the Mapplethorpe exhibit was canceled, but not before Wildmon found four other strawpersons, led by performance artist Karen Finley and photographer Andres Serrano, to further bolster his point.

Nothing epitomized the object of religious rage more than Serrano's defilement of a crucifix soaked in urine. As pedestrian and commonplace as such an image is in contemporary American art culture, the fact that it was paid for using public money meant that it had a lot more symbolic power than a privately funded masterpiece of anti-religious art like Slayer's 1986 LP, *Reign in Blood*. Add performance artist Karen Finley's naked torso to the equation, cover her in chocolate icing and then listen to her recite a monologue about being raped with a rump steak next to a slurpee machine, have the gig inadvertently financed by some poor farmer in rural Iowa who'd just lost his property to a bank foreclosure and voila, it's all over. You don't need any more ammunition than that to delegitimize the official culture of a country sliding deeper and deeper into the recession and chaos of economic restructuring.

Serrano and Finley, among many other artists on the federal payroll at the time, had their grants rescinded. They were the vanguard of a new generation of radical artists to be faced with a lack of public funding. While they appealed their loss of resources and eventually won their cases, they lost the bigger battle. The precedent had already been set for the state to divest itself of its liberal cultural holdings. After President Bush fired National Endowment for the Humanities chairman John Frohnmayer over censorship issues related to the arts and humanities, federal funding of the NEA continued to slide under repeated assaults by Republican and Democratic congressmen eager to score points with their growing conservative constituencies.

By 1997, in response to two judgments by district and appellate courts who ruled that the state had no right to censor publicly funded artists on the basis of public propriety, under the initiative of the Clinton Administration, the Supreme Court instated constitutionally binding decency standards which prohibited the government from funding certain kinds of art which violated ambiguous, religiously determined notions of cultural conduct. The liberal era of the cultural welfare state was now officially over. The cultural logic of the new conservatism had finally been etched in legislative stone. The responsibility for the maintenance of a new American arts culture had been handed over to the free market in much the same way that the state had given it the right to redistribute rights and income.

SECURING CULTURAL LEGITIMATION

Despite this massive shift to the right, there are still some serious differences between Clinton's politics and the Republican ones which preceded him which make his administration's political orientation seem a bit more liberal. Clinton hasn't taken the same conservative stance towards reproductive rights that Reagan did. He did oppose bans on fetal tissue research, and for a while he struggled against a ban on third trimester abortions. And Clinton did try half-heartedly to have the state recognize the equality of queer sexual orientations in his vain attempt to have gays silently recognized by the US military establishment.

Clinton also hasn't taken as explicitly an intolerant a position towards cultural politics as Ronald Reagan and George Bush did either, despite the fact that he is the first president to place restrictions on how federal cultural agencies fund the arts. After all, Clinton has tried to be a youth president. He blew his horn on MTV; in the wake of Kurt Cobain's suicide, he even invited ticket-price conscious, child-welfare concerned liberals such as Pearl Jam and Soul Asylum over to the White House to discuss teen issues. These were really great public relations moves deliberately targeted at a youth audience. As discredited as such bands are with people in the supposed know, it certainly earns higher marks in the suave department than Boris Yeltsin inviting MC Hammer to have dinner at the Kremlin. Then again, we don't live in Russia—or so we thought.

Obviously Clinton understood that it's important not to marginalize would-be supporters in the rock community, particularly at a time when big money artists such as REM and former members of Nirvana were forming political action committees supposedly dedicated to combating censorship and racial prejudice, such as JAMPAC, Rock the Vote and Artists For a Hate-Free America. This new liberal rock constituency had a lot of money, and because of its fading punk roots, something of a conscience too. No wonder there have been no congressional hearings on the immorality of rock culture in '90s America the way there was during the '80s, when Clinton's own Vice President's wife, Tipper Gore, scored big points with Christian voters by reciting the lyrics to Mentors' songs such as "Smell My Anal Vapor Baby" to rapt, Bible Belt busting legislators on Capitol Hill. Suddenly the idea of rock millionaire Eddie Vedder sharing a sofa with Tipper and Al several years later while they talked about the problems which confront America's youth makes an awful lot of sense.

But embracing the current crop of successful rock and roll liberals in order to score brownie points with cable television-watching future indie rockers of America is not the same thing as helping stem the decline of big government. It gives the impression that Americans equate state legitimation of popular culture with a, metaphorically speaking, culturally big government, the kind of government which tolerates freedom of speech as long as it doesn't pay for it by placing this responsibility in the hands of the culture industry. The problem is that the American government has washed its hands of bureaucratic responsi-

bility for defining a democratic civil culture. It has turned this supposedly unique mandate over to the market because it falls in line with how the financial establishment currently thinks about democracy. The state doesn't want to have to promote participatory democracy culturally because it objects to democratic politics formally—they run contrary to contemporary ideologies of economic productivity. When the cultural left moans about how the state doesn't support art anymore, they ought to remember that.

Under Clinton, the role of the government in our everyday lives hasn't so much been diminished as much as it has been redefined. The executive branch spends more time coordinating the economy and responding to the demands of the private sector than it ever did while spending less time responding to the demands of the public sector. In the name of deficit reduction, Clinton has followed the Republican ethos of bureaucratic decentralization by ending welfare as we once knew it, cutting off aid to dependent children, slashing school lunch programs, neutralizing affirmative action policies and putting limits on the amount of time individuals can stay on welfare rolls. Similarly, Clinton has also turned over the administration of public assistance payments to less benevolent, budget-conscious state governments in the form of block grants, eliminating the federal government's role in directly administering a great deal of public resources.

Downsizing the state's role in redistributing rights and income hasn't effected other areas of public spending, where the government remains as committed to doling out public resources as it was when it was ostensibly much bigger. For example, the defense budget hasn't shrunk dramatically despite the end of the conflict with the former Soviet Union. Frequent military deployments in the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Haiti and the Balkans over the past six years have, to a large extent, prevented the kinds of decreases in the extraordinary levels of military spending which characterized the core of America's 1960s warfare state economy. Much of the public resources that might have been spent on public assistance during another more generous period in history are now disbursed to unstable foreign governments, such as Mexico and Korea, to shore up their ailing economies or it's spent on high technology firms in the private sector to build a so-called "bridge to the future."

THE CULTURE INDUSTRY AS GUARDIAN OF DEMOCRACY

In an era when the culture industry has by default replaced the state as the primary institution responsible for the cultivation of liberal civic virtues, the only guarantees of existing democracy are symbolic ones. Mass culture, like religion, always represents democratic utopias in the here and now, as though it were something already achieved. What's transpired over the past twenty years is that ideology has caught up with reality. In the place of the non-existent liberal welfare state of the 1960s, we live with the imagery and sounds of an era that never even existed, as though it were actually an existing reality.

The problem, of course, is that there is a disjuncture. The benevolent, multiracial, gender tolerant mass culture of the late nineteen-nineties does not correspond with the greedy, self-serving racist realities of the new conservative establishment. That's why the culture industry serves up such liberal utopian imagery. In the absence of a kinder and gentler society, it reverts back to old fashioned forms of propaganda which invert our experience of sexual hierarchy, of racism and economic disparity by telling us that we've overcome them. We are given real life examples too, because the culture business, unlike the stock market or the real estate profession, thrives on a liberal marketing ideology which turns every kind of possible social distinction like gay lifestyle politics, Jewish neurosis, or African-American oral culture into commodities which by virtue of their entertainment value, are the new prerequisites for full citizenship. When you can't legislatively guarantee freedom from discrimination, you grant it culturally because the market needs new commodities to sustain itself.

If you look at the political content of every aspect of contemporary, mass-produced culture, this fact is as plain as the eye can see. A&M feels free to produce records by nouveau black nationalists like Ice Cube. The Knitting Factory feels no contradiction about putting out Hasidic-inspired free jazz records. And rock bands like Sleater-Kinney can come out to their parents in the pages of SPIN magazine just like Ellen did on television last year. Now that's freedom! The message tells us, if they can do it, we can do it because we now have the liberty to do so. But that liberty doesn't actually exist; we have no real rights—we've fetishized difference as something that can be exchanged. We don't need the state to subsidize the production of democratic culture anymore because the cultural economy does it for us. Every single commodity produced by independent and multinational entertainment conglomerates celebrates every possible form of individuality, every stripe of ethnicity and every kind of sexuality, from Seinfeld to Go Fish, all the way to Shoah, and let's not forget, Amistad.

That's why we continue to see salvation in becoming cultural producers instead of political reformers, because a well-oiled productive machine like a successful independent record or film production company fits in with the concept of political liberation created by the new state and the new marketplace. Nonetheless, the buck doesn't stop here. No matter how falsely optimistic the new utopia is, culture always leads back to politics. In the absence of a clearly identifiable state capable of concretely insuring equal rights, cultural producers who get used to being allowed to express their difference as a commodity end up wanting more than just symbolic affirmation of their right to be themselves because they begin to experience limits to their own freedom. They begin to find instances in their own lives which prohibit them from professional advancement in fields other than entertainment. Their children get discriminated against when they have to get real jobs; or they find that there's no true accounting of their respective histories in popular history books or documentaries on public television; or they find that the government's reluctance to prohibit structural discrimination leads them to lose their rights altogether once some savvy political conservative fears that they've gained too much power.

This makes for an uneasy balance between business and equality, where cultural attitudes towards all manifestations of ethnic, cultural or sexual distinction are predicated upon the whims of trade and not legal sanctions which guarantee impartiality. This makes fairness hostage to the principle of exchange, because it subjects political education about equality to the ebb and flow of profit making, something that the state is supposed to guarantee regardless of prevailing financial winds in the American economy. You might as well bet your fate on an astrological chart, it's that dicey, but that's exactly what the new corporate state is all about and why we ought to fear it. ©

Just Something I Do

A Tasmanian wolf from an old LIFE magazine bears his fangs in the middle of a tiled floor while one pasty white girl lies in a wrought-iron bed screaming and another bright pink one lays on the floor shackled and splayed. From the corner, a muddish shitlike shadow of a man looks on. Looming above it all is a smashed and dismembered doll head I found in the gutter; half of her face is missing from some violent burn. She's wrapped in a piece of my mom's old fake leopard skin coat. This whole scene is framed in lace from my grandmother's fabric drawer, chain I found on the waterfront in my hometown, broken mirror and aluminum foil. Its title, Fever Dream, is pasted to the background in newspaper letters, like a forgotten ransom note. This is a piece of my art.

I've been making things as long as I can remember. I grew up the daughter of an iron worker and a bookkeeper in a working class San Francisco suburb. My mom's childhood in a poor Italian-American household with a bunch of wacky, creative people taught her that making things was simply a way of life. She passed that lesson on to me. In my blue collar family, making things was a perfectly normal and expected thing to do. My mom taught me how to make hats out of beer cans and yarn; my dad taught me how to weld junk mechanical parts into pipes and little men. Our Christmas tree was decorated with ornaments, made from ravioli sauce lids, cat food cans, and thread spools. I grew up making things out of garbage and now I use garbage to define my life in art.

This picture of my home may sound like something from a story book or TV show, but it doesn't go beneath the surface. What you don't see in the picture is what my home was like underneath, when we weren't happily making things. Alcoholism, child abuse, rage, violence: These were also a way of life in my house, and what I understand now is that these were a result of my parent's complete dissatisfaction with the American Dream and their bondage to a materialist culture that they could never seem to live up to—and didn't necessarily want in the first place. What I knew then was that I had to get out of that situation. So I did.

I left home at 15 to a life on the streets defined by the sex industry and drugs. Somehow in all my confused anger, punk was my refuge. It made me feel that someone understood what I



by Kim Nicollini



*Collage,
Assemblage
&
Xerography
in Punk Art*

was feeling and helped me understand the forces that were at work in my life. Eventually, I got off the streets, off drugs and out of the sex industry, but I still hung onto my punk identity. I'll be punk when I'm 90 because I understand that punk is not just music or fashion; it is political attitude and understanding.

I've spent the last 15 years trying to explain my life, my situation, and the social forces that molded me through my art. When I started, I was completely broke. I had no money, no job and no skills, but I needed to make art. I also had no need for glamour, prestige or legitimacy, so it wasn't hard to find materials. I cruised dumpsters in downtown alleys and pilfered a ton of junk just begging to become art: magazines, newspapers, old hardware, hoses, doll parts, cast off junk. I collected it all and started to build a map of myself and my world.

What I began to realize was that almost all the junk I collected, from liquor labels to fashion magazines, from tabloid newspapers to toy cartons, had specific political and social meaning that played a role in my life and the culture that defined my existence. When I started breaking these things apart and rebuilding them into my own image, I was able to understand the intricate forces that had molded me and driven me away from mainstream society, onto the streets and into punk.

That's what good punk art does: It breaks down the propaganda pushed on us by mass culture and puts the pieces back together to reveal that culture in a new light, showing the exploitive and cohesive message that lies beneath its deceptive surface. Placing a fine-tuned Corvette engine from *Mechanics Illustrated* next to a *Playboy* centerfold and a refrigerator ad from *Ladies Home Journal* next to a diagram from *Encyclopedia Britannica* showing different cuts of beef, I came to realize how insidious power structures are and that class, gender, capitalism and authoritarianism are all tied together. I started finding the reason for that ambiguous anger and dissatisfaction that drove me to the streets and to punk in the late '70s and a voice to express this new found consciousness. My obsession with technical magazines and manuals and cheesy women's magazines from the 60s was a product of my class background—but it was also more than that. It represented an innate understanding of the subliminal messages of the media that completely infiltrated my world.

Deconstructing the American Dream

My parents' house is populated by empty artifacts of the American Dream. They live in a quiet court in a suburban subdivision. They own a double refrigerator, a large screen TV, a VCR, a Cadillac, a freezer full of beef and his and her recliner chairs, but the house buzzes with an all-encompassing emptiness. The very walls seem to shake with dissatisfaction and agitation as my mother wanders from room to room proclaiming that she "doesn't need any of this shit." My dad has to believe in the American Dream—he broke his body climbing buildings and pulling iron rods for 40 years to buy into it. He also broke his kids and his family with the violence that spilled out of him on a daily basis because the American Dream was not fulfilling his needs.

This is where punk comes in. Punk disassembles this illusion of the American Dream and throws it back in the public's face. The entire construction of the American Dream is dictated by the mass media and the political system. Middle and working class people have been trained to believe that they can buy happiness through the materials produced by corporate powers. They have been taught that choosing a political leader or voting on an issue is no different than choosing a new laundry detergent or cologne. This type of thinking keeps dangerous power structures in place and advances the agenda of the corporations behind that power. Every day, the average American is bombarded by thousands of images and messages straight from the slate of the capitalist vanguards; Barbies to Big Macs, Camels to Nikes, pills to perfume, Melrose Place to Pat Robertson. America is drowning in a sea of capitalist ideology, and punk collagists, assemblagists and xerographers are scooping up the garbage floating on the surface and rearranging it into a very different picture of society that reveals the American Dream to be a lie. They reveal the dark truth lurking behind its gleaming facade. These punk artists cannibalize the images of mass media in the same way that advertising and corporate politics cannibalize the lives of the masses. To add more power to the punch, these artists also adopt the political iconography created to advance the conservative agenda and turn it on its head.

These days, a lot of art does this sort of thing. But the approach of many punk artists is different. Unlike the art you see in galleries and museums, these artists take their battle with the American Dream to the streets. Instead of

being confined to limited and elite spaces, art is plastered all over the society which it critiques; it literally covers the city, pasted to walls, lamp posts, doors, and windows. It is passed out on streets, at concerts, and in record stores for free. The venue for this art is true public space. Because it is displayed and distributed for free in public spaces, the precious value attached to art by the capitalist and "artocratic" market is undermined while the product distribution and advertising of mainstream consumer culture is mocked.

With the incorporation of advertising, mass media, political iconography, religion and sex, collage, assemblage and xerography shows that anything can be defined as "art" while at the same time offering a direct critique of consumer culture and the political systems that promote it. The seemingly random "thrown together" look of this art illuminates the chaos and destruction that underscore our lives. This effect is further heightened by the way language is used. By employing words and phrases cut from mainstream newspapers and magazines, the words with which ideology is spread through the mass media instead teach the truth about power and capital. Winston Smith's poster from the Dead Kennedys' first album *Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables* is a perfect example. The words "I'll lead you astray and you'll like it," cut from different sources and then superimposed on the face of Ronald Reagan, a cocktail and the word "sex" make the coercion, corruption and greed of dominant power structures much more explicit. The uglification of culture produced this way inherently relies on shock value to get its message across. By creating this sort of visual vomit, the art shocks people into thinking differently and makes them reconsider the social and political forces binding their lives. Collage, assemblage and xerography uses the refuse of mass culture to refuse compliance with the status quo.

Cutting Up the Cutting Edge

Punk artists certainly aren't the first artists to take on mass media, corporate capitalists and the political right. Traditionally, the avant garde has been a left-oriented art movement working to deconstruct the mainstream ideology that manifests itself throughout culture. The avant garde has always prided itself on being politically conscientious and ground breaking. The problem is that the avant garde is, for the most part, the elite that relies on a visual and intellectual

language that remains inaccessible to the majority of the public. Avant garde art is not only inaccessible to the masses, but those people who create it tend to have much more capital, privilege, leisure time and cultural assets than the average person consuming mass culture. Punk artists of all mediums may share the agenda of traditional avant garde artists, but our art is art for the public; it is firmly grounded in everyday reality. Punk's "in your face" style, often coupled with familiar images from the mass media, make it much more accessible to the average person. Sure, maybe that person won't always agree with or want to acknowledge the message, but it will still come through loud and clear.

If I were to show my dad the toilet that the pioneering avant garde artist Marcel Duchamp exhibited as art, he'd say, "So what.

By making art from garbage, the notion of a pristine elite art form is itself revealed as a bunch of garbage.

It's a toilet." He'd think it was stupid and he certainly wouldn't understand the hidden meaning. But if I was to show my dad Winston Smith's poster from that first Dead Kennedys' album, he would at least have something to say about it. Some of the messages may seem overly simplistic and obvious like "A Church in Decay," "Don't Live in Fear," and "Coping with Toxic Waste." But by combining these cut-up phrases with icons of American culture like Uncle Sam, Mickey Mouse, the Pope, the Pillsbury Doughboy and the Jolly Green Giant, this poster shows us that it is not only products are being sold through American advertising, but the ideology that makes those products seem necessary. By examining the juxtaposition of these images, people (even my dad) cannot help but feel at least confused by them and hopefully inspired to question the role the media and politics plays in their lives. In the process of mixing up these messages, these punk artists jumble and shake the ideological ground that people have been standing on.

The Means of Production

Punk art not only deconstructs capitalist power structures, it also questions the elitism of the "artocracy." To be an artist in the late 20th century is to be in a position of high privilege. It requires the phenomenal cost of art school, a studio space, and the over priced art supplies marketed to the art elite. Collagists, assemblagists and xerographers skirt the art-oriented capitalist market by mostly relying on society's refuse. The materials are cheap: old magazines, newspapers, posters, packaging. So are the means of production: All it takes are scissors, glue, access to a cheap Xerox machine, or whatever you can think of to bind your images together. If I hadn't used society's garbage to produce my art when I was starting out, I would not have been able to make art at all.

The political, social and economic implications of punk aesthetics are intertwined with art's actual process and style; the medium and the message go hand in hand. Art is brought down off of its lofty throne and shown that it can be made with very small economic means. By making art from garbage, the notion of a pristine elite art form is itself revealed as a bunch of garbage.

In xerography, the main tool for reproduction and mass production is not the lithographer's stone, but the Xerox machine. The use of the photocopier has multiple subversive implications. Not only do punk artists undermine and skirt the elite arena of high art and its slick marketing and production, but they frequently pirate the copy machines in their workplace to produce their art. When artists use photocopiers, they're using the power of the corporation to create art which targets corporate power. This use of the photocopier strips the aura of "high culture" from art while at the same time mirroring the process of mass production in order to critique capitalism because, like a factory, the machine makes one identical copy after another.

Failures of Perception

Of course, there's another side to the relationship between punk and corporate culture. I left San Francisco for a few years and returned in the early '80s. I brought a friend of mine to the Mabuhay Gardens so he could experience the San Francisco punk scene. The first thing we saw when we walked in the door was the "gift shop," with all kinds of mass-produced T-shirts and punk fashions that you could buy to become "instantly punk." I was horrified and never went back there again. That was over 15 years ago—it is infinitely worse now.

Because punk communicates openly and directly by using familiar images, and because almost everyone can derive meaning from it, punk art is also subject to gross misinterpretations as well as the relative ease with which it can be co-opted by corporate interests. The mass production of punk aesthetics, especially in the years since the "punk boom" of 1994, has extended itself to graphic art and advertising. Everyone from Levi Strauss to Camel has jumped on the punk bandwagon to try to sell their products. This is especially true in the corporate co-option of punk's use of irony.

Perception has been a big problem for punk art of all forms because some people have difficulty in distinguishing between irony and sincerity. By graphically portraying violence, racism and misogyny, punk art is criticizing these, not promoting them. For example, I use a lot of graphic sexual imagery in my art work to critique gender constraints and the commodification of the female body, but there are always those who see my work as pornography rather than social critique. Similarly, certain factions, such as skinhead culture, have adopted and interpreted punk's graphic style and message as a means to promote and encourage violence and racism. This is not punk. Factions such as skinheads have chosen everyday people as their targets rather than the corporate and old money powers that create class and race divisions.

It is not enough to just rebel. Rebellion must affect education and social change and must work toward dismantling old and deeply embedded power structures. If it doesn't do that, it is not meaningful, and it is not touching upon the heart of punk. The political and social message is the key to any punk art. It's important to remember that punk art, be it collage assemblage, xerography or photography, printing, tattooing, video-making, whatever, isn't just aesthetics: It's also attitude, politics and action. ©

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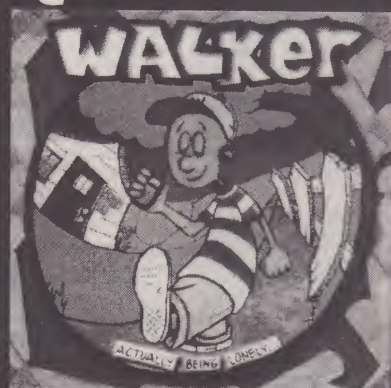
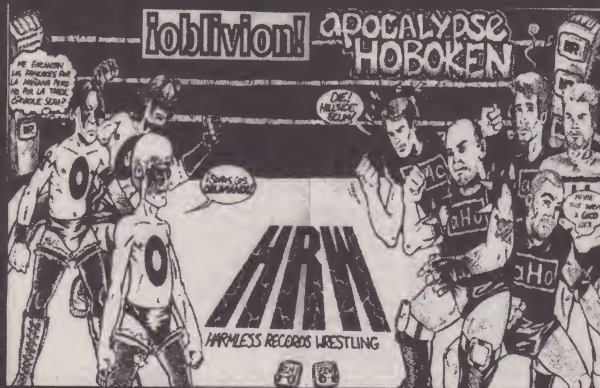


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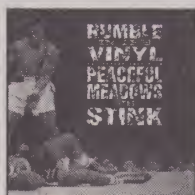
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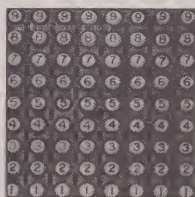
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jason: brandy and coke

josh: imports

dan: clairol midnight black

jason: natural instincts nutmeg

josh: nice and easy blue black

dan: 6'1

jason: 5'10

josh: 6'0

dan: x-files

jason: party of five

josh: seinfeld

dan: simple classics

jason: converse jack purcells

josh: creepers, wingtips,
fluevog saddles, adidas

dan: 9:15

jason: 10:30

josh: 10:33

dan: dabbles

jason: jmoney, the money man

josh: hootdog

dan: morningstar farms chick nuggets

jason: general tso's faux chicken

josh: all things mexican

dan: thinks he knows aikido

jason: never leaves the house

josh: has a problem with his diet
coke consumption

dan: designer

jason: designer

josh: designer



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THE FILES

Typography Made Easy

By Josh Hooten

A DIY file on typography may seem a bit remote to hold most of *Punk Planet*'s readership's attention, I know, but these days there are so many zines being produced and quite a few publishers fancying themselves graphic designers without having a handle on the basics of typography that it seems such an article is necessary. For those who don't care at all but pride themselves on reading things cover to cover, I'll throw in some jokes to keep things interesting for you.

Knowing computer programs does not a competent designer make. The computer and all its various software are simply a tool with which you create layouts. You get out what you put in, nothing more, nothing less. Computer savvy will only get you so far and it will never replace honest know how and knowledge of what makes a layout work. Typography may seem like something of a nonentity to many of you, or something you needn't concern yourself with, but even if you're not trying to win any graphic design honors with your layouts, competent presentation of your content will go a long way in getting people to read your stuff. Ugly typesetting can make reading your articles difficult, uncomfortable, and can make a lot of people stop all together no matter how interesting it may be. If the type is so small it gives me a headache, chances are I'm not going to suffer through your 7,000 word essay on the importance of veganism—chances are I wouldn't suffer through it anyway, but you get my meaning.

For those who strive for graphic excellence—or you just want things to read better—but don't know the basics of typography (and unless you've suffered through a formal design education, or you're a real self-taught go-getter, I don't know why you would), let this stand as a helping hand in your quest. The basics are pretty easy and decent looking typesetting is within your reach. Don't be afraid, and don't be a snob and pretend it doesn't matter just because you don't understand it. As Robert Bringhurst (some guy who wrote a book) says, "Typography exists to honor content." You may not care what it looks like, but you must care about being read or you wouldn't be writing or publish-

ing in the first place. Honor your content with legible typography.

The first thing to do when deciding on your typesetting is to look at what it is you are laying out. What is the goal of the content? Is it text for an ad for your debut 7"? Is it an interview with your favorite power violence band? Is it a long personal article about something close to you? The objectives of the text for all these uses is very different. You want your choice of typefaces and how you set them to reflect the content. If you're still not convinced of the important factor that typography will play in anything you do that involves type, think of it like this: The type you choose and how you set that type is going to either work for you or it's going to work against you. If you ignore it, chances are it'll work against you. You should pay attention.

CHOOSING FONTS

There are as many fonts out there as there are ways to use them. But just because there are millions of choices doesn't mean they are all good or even appropriate for your use. When choosing your typefaces, you should first think about what the function of your text is. If it's a novel, you may want to pick something that is comfortable for long distance reading. Most likely a serif set at a size that's not so small you have to strain to see it, but no so big it will slow you down. Look at a decent hardback book (not paperback) and see how they set their type. Check out the font, the size, the leading, and the length of each line. Read a few pages and see how it feels. If it's a hardback, it will probably have decently set type. Paperbacks are generally bad examples because they are put together poorly and cheaply with the goal being to make a profit, so the type is set with the goal of saving space (money). Check out the type in a well-made book and try modeling your type after that. An appropriate type size for a text that is to be read for any length of time depends on the font itself. However, most fonts read comfortably somewhere between 8 pt. and 12 pt. Be safe and try a few sizes to see what works best for a specific font. If you're laying out an ad

or putting captions under photos or setting liner notes for a record, you can get a lot smaller than you'd go for a lengthier text. One or two or three lines of type can be read at very small sizes because it's not being read for very long. Plus, you may be setting necessary, but not particularly important, information so it's perfectly valid to set that at a very small size. Again, look around at other graphic design and see how the pros are doing it and do what they do. You're not stealing from them, they're following age-old guidelines themselves.

Just like you've got favorite records that you listen to that never let you down, it's not a bad idea to develop a set of favorite typefaces. The only way you'll get good at setting a certain typeface is if you set it over and over and over in a number of different ways. This is how you'll learn the strengths and weaknesses and the limitation of the fonts you use. If you're jumping around and never use the same font twice, you'll never get good at any of them. It's fun and perfectly valid to experiment with wacky font-of-the-month novelty fonts, but it's a good idea to have a few faces you're totally comfortable with, and that you know how to work well with.

When you sit down to choose fonts for a project, be sure you know the demands of the text before you start. Determine the hierarchy of the content. If it's an interview with Spazz, you may have a headline, a subhead, an introduction, questions, answers, pull quotes, and maybe some randomly placed lyrics about kung fu-ing rollerbladers in your layout. It would be unwise, grasshopper, to set all of it in the same size and same weight of the same font. Everything would look the same and nobody would know what the different parts of the story were. You need to pick a font with a few different weights (light, book, medium, bold, etc.) and a few different styles (condensed, extended, italic, etc.) to set apart the different parts. You may want to mix it up with a few different fonts. You may have this really cool looking blown out typewriter font (it's called Trixie by the way) that you want to use 'cuz it's perfect for power violence and then you may want to set your insightful questions in a sans serif and Chris Dodge's or Hiram Max's clever retorts in a serif (that's how *Punk Planet* sets its interviews up: Franklin Gothic for the Q's and Adobe Garamond for the A's. Don't it look nice? It was my ideal!) Perhaps you set the introduction in a bold italic style of the sans serif you're using in

the interview itself and you set the lyrics and pull quotes in Trixie bold to match the headline and the subhead. Nicely done.

Just remember, having access to a million fonts doesn't mean using them all at once will help your layouts. Personally, I don't remember the last time I used more than three fonts for any one project. Not to say it can't be done with style and taste, it's just not very often that a project calls for such an indulgence. Plus, keeping it simple will help you keep the layouts under control. Once you get comfortable enough, you may want to go crazy and see what madness you can pull off; but at the end, always critique your layouts and ask if the typography you're using is helping or hurting your content. Are you honoring your content or are you throwing fonts all over the damn place just because you can? Are you making it easier or harder for you reader to navigate through your text?

THE BEAUTY'S IN THE DETAILS

Leading is the amount of space between two lines of text. Too much leading makes the end of one line and the beginning of the next too far apart and it's hard for the reader's eye to connect quickly enough to keep reading at a set pace. The reader will get irritated, put your zine down, and not even know why. Leading that is too tight makes things look bunched together and is part of the reason you read the same line over and over again instead of moving on to the next one. Not enough leading is a good way to get your reader to throw your zine away after about two paragraphs because it is so uncomfortable to get through. Don't give me some bullshit *Change Zine* answer like "If I bunch the lines together really close I can fit more stuff in the issue therefore it's a better zine and I don't have to shell out the \$12 dollars to get a few more pages printed so I can save a little money that I can then go and spend on tighty whitey underpants with *The Simpsons* printed on the ass." Sure you save \$12 and get the neato underpants, but what's the use if nobody is reading your stuff 'cuz it gives them a headache?

Leading, like type size, is measured in points. For example, if you set your vegan cookie recipes in Caslon at 12 points — you're probably going to want to set your leading somewhere around 14 to 16 point leading for maximum readability. If you set 12 point text at 12 point leading, it's called "setting it solid,"

and it's not recommended. Most fonts need more space than that between lines of text to account for ascenders and descenders (we're talking about things like the tops of b's & d's and the bottoms of p's & q's, respectively), as well as general real good feel good. If you want to sound like a pro the next time you're at the emo clubhouse and the kids are fawning over your 12 point Adobe Garamond that you set with 15 point leading and asking how you did it, you tell them, "It's Garamond set 12 over 15." That's the way you say it when you want to sound like a type dork—I use it all the time. It may not get you the ladies, but if you're ever in a conversation with some uptight professional designers (most of them are uptight, trust me) you'll certainly hold your own if you use the lingo. Throwing the lingo around is also a good way of making a dumb client think you know more than you do when you're trying to get them to send you more work—trust me on that one too.

Kerning, also known as letterspacing is the space between the individual letters on a line of text. To be honest, you can live a long and fruitful life never bothering to kern the type you set, but if you want to be a really good designer, you'd better learn a thing or two about it. If you ever want to get a really good design job, you'd better understand that any art director worth her weight is looking at this too. It's seems like such a minute detail (that's why most of you may never need to worry about it), but it's how you separate the true craftsmen from the other designers. The purpose of good letterspacing is basically twofold. When you're setting type digitally (on your computer) some characters will bump up against each other unless you go in and fine tune it. You don't want letters to bump up against each other because it hampers legibility, if only slightly, and isn't very professional (if you're worried about such things.) The other reason is that some characters require more space to exist comfortably on a page than others. Meaning that a lowercase "i" takes up less horizontal space than a capital "Q" does, but your computer may not compensate for this and it may make the space around the "i" the same as the space around the "Q" which, if you're anal retentive (which I'm not) is a big deal. If you're thinking this is the most boring section of this article to read, believe me, it's

also the most boring to write. The untamed blandness of typographic minutia set me free!

Line length is exactly what it sounds like. It may not seem very important, but that's because most people naturally set a line length that isn't offending or difficult to read. That's because when it's bad, it's very obvious to even the most untrained eye. I get away with bad letterspacing all day long because it's such a small offense and hard to notice if you're not looking for it, but a bad line length makes itself known quickly and loudly. How many words should go on a line of text depends on the content and the type size, but common sense will tell you if it's too long or too short. Too long a line can get troublesome when you get to the end of one and your eye has to travel too far back across the page to get to the beginning of the next. This leads to eye strain and rereading the same line over and over or skipping lines because it's such a long distance to travel. Too short a line means that you have to break your rhythm too often to return to the next line that the thoughts expressed in the text don't have time to register very well and so you don't really get a handle on what the story is about. It fragments the text and makes it feel scattered and hard to get much out of because you're spending as much moving between the lines as you are actually reading them. A comfortable line length is kind of one of those "you'll know it when you see it," kind of deals. The line length is more or less determined by how many columns you set up on your page. I don't think I've ever set more than three columns on a standard letter size piece of paper, unless there was some strange, uncommon, reason for me to do so. For a very basic grid that you will build your layout on, two or three columns is generally good. As always, find examples in bookstores and magazine stores and see how they do it. Or, when you're reading things, just pay attention to the reading process itself and see how easy or difficult it is for you to move through the text. Notice what kinds of content are set with long lines and what is set with shorter lines. Use your common sense and always read the type you set to see how comfortable or uncomfortable you are reading it. That way you'll know how your reader is going to feel.

WIDOWS & ORPHANS, KILL EM' ALL, THAT'S WHAT I SAY.

Widows and orphans, bless their hearts, should be stomped out like the plague. They are the most obvious and easy to eliminate of all our typographic problems. Before I get labeled a tyrant, let me explain to those of you who don't know exactly what I mean by "widows" and "orphans." Widows are when a paragraph ends with the last word ending on a line of its own. That word on its own line is a widow—you don't want it. Orphans are when a paragraph ends with only one line returning up to the top of a column—you don't want those either. The good news is they are pretty easy to take care of. The bad news is that if you don't take care of them they make themselves so visible that anybody who knows anything about type will kick you right in the monkeys. You can fix those little bastards by making minute tracking adjustments (adding a little to get more text on that line, or taking away a little bit to pull the stray word up to the line above.) One of the quickest ways to make your typography better is to take care of those widows and orphans.

ENDGAME

A sign that the typographer has done his job well (barring the *Raygun* school of typesetting) is that the reading experi-

ence is so seamless that you don't even notice the typography. Most times when you're reading an article, you only notice the type when it is causing you a problem because it is set badly. The job of a typographer, at least some of the time, is to do her job and disappear. If your type is causing eye strain or is hard to follow from line to line, then you've done a poor job of setting that type. If you've worked hard at writing a piece or were lucky enough to get an earth shattering and enlightening interview with Unwound, you don't want your typesetting to get in the way, do you? The focal point of your piece is what the words say, not how you put those words on the page. If your content is to be read—and it most certainly is to be read—don't fuck it up with wacked-out design that makes it inaccessible. It's a disservice to your writing, or somebody else's, to render it illegible.

Everyone can and should make their type work harder for them. The basics are pretty easy and are based on common sense. If you ignore them, or try to cram too much stuff into limited space, the hard work that went into writing the pieces will be completely lost. Remember: Nobody struggles through type that you've reduced on the photocopier so small it gives them a headache to read. If you follow some very basic, very easy rules you can at least be certain people aren't throwing your zine away unread because of the typography. ©

Type In Print: books on typography

THIS READING LIST CONTAINS BOOKS HANDY FOR BOTH THE VERY BEGINNER JUST GETTING HIS FEET WET IN THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF TYPOGRAPHY ALL THE WAY UP TO THE SEASONED PRO JUST LOOKING TO BRUSH UP HER ALREADY-IMPECCABLE SKILLS. THERE IS A LOT OF GOOD TO BE HAD CHECKING THESE OUT AND YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF AND ABILITIES WITH TYPE WILL INCREASE DRAMATICALLY.

Stop Stealing Sheep and Find Out How Type Works by Erik Spiekermann and E.M. Ginger. Adobe Press.

The perfect book for an amusing and comprehensive beginning to typography. I've read this book six times and continue to refer to it frequently. Everyone with even the slightest interest in type should own this.

Typographic Design: Form and Communication by Rob Carter, Ben Day, and Philip Meggs. Van Nostrand Reinhold. A textbook for typography classes, this

book covers the history of the printed letterform all the way to semi-present day with a strong bias towards the modernist aesthetic. A very in-depth look at the anatomy of type along with samples of many classic fonts. A great reference for the facts on type.

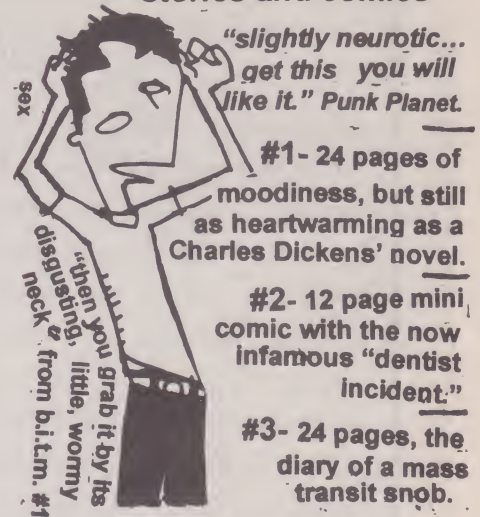
The Elements of Typographic Style by Robert Bringhurst. Hartley & Marks. A style book on how to most efficiently use type. It's pretty old school in its agenda, but you gotta know the rules so you'll

know how to break 'em, you know what I'm saying? This book is overflowing with insightful guidelines.

An Essay on Typography by Eric Gill. Originally published in 1931, this book is really only for type geeks. It's an interesting journey through the history and application of type from the days of old. It becomes interesting when you realize how applicable much of it is still today. I bet you a million dollars none of you read this. It's good though, and you can learn a lot from it.

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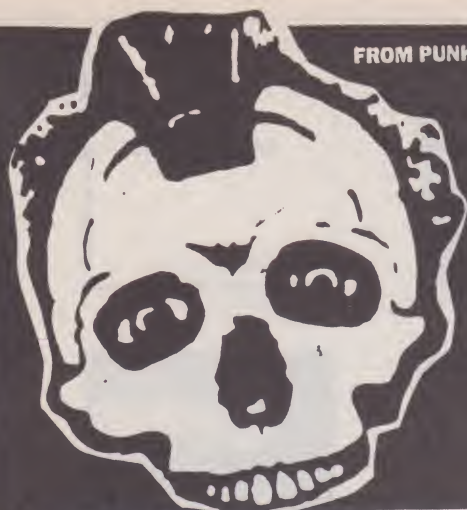
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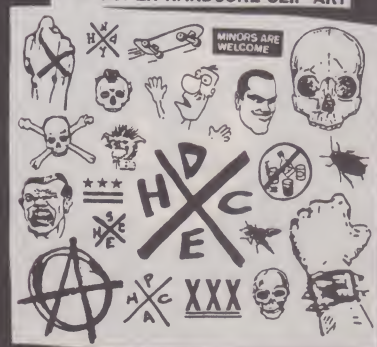
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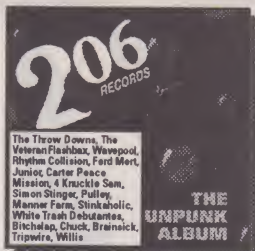
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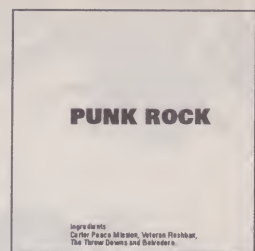
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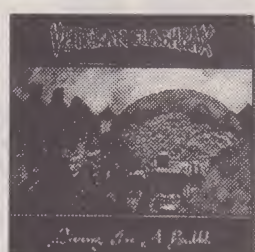
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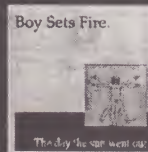
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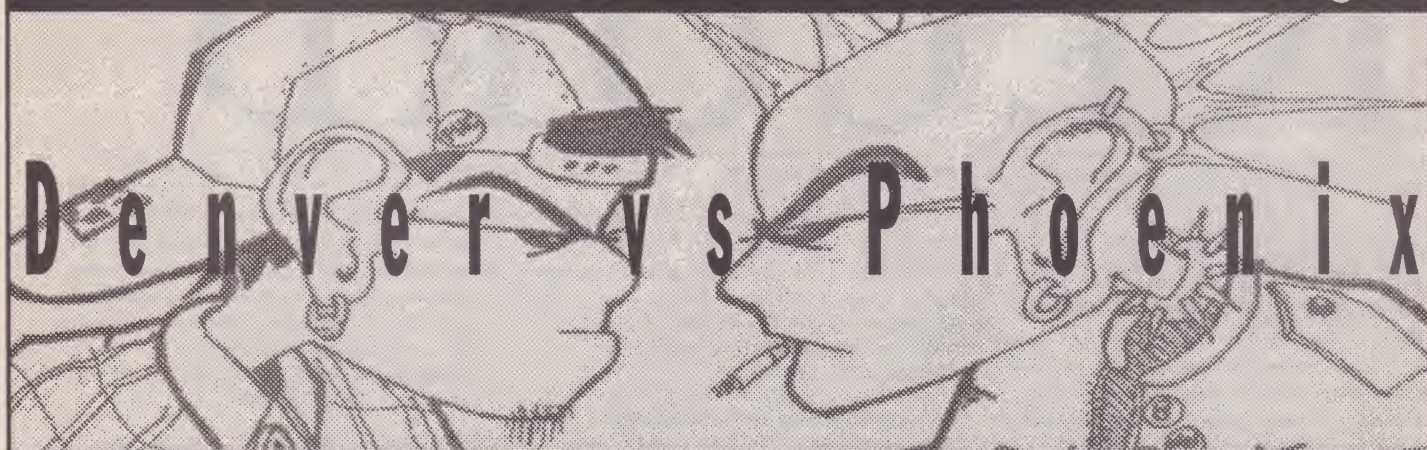


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NUMERICAL

12 Tone System - Soundtrack to Synthetic Music, 7" 3-songs falling somewhere near the genre of Stereolab, without the same repetition. Sorta like a punk New Order with analog equipment... or Hawkwind. I really dig this. I'll be buying their full length, if they happen to put one out. (MH) Keystone-Ember, PO Box 1798, Wilkes-Barre PA 18703

25 Ta Life - Strength Through Unity -- the Spirit Remains, 7" Watch out kids, 25 Ta Life is here to smash down the walls -- the same objective stated by a million other bands that sounded just like this in the 80s. More of that NYC hardcore, steeped in attitude, talking about the crew and remaining true. It's got song names like "loyal to the grave," there's a huge thanks list, and it's covered with pictures of the band and the crowd glaring at each other and pointing. What sets this band apart from the scores of others just like this is their terrible vocals ... sounding hard never sounded so silly. Avoid this at all costs. (SM) Triple Crown Records, 331 W. 57th St. #472, New York, NY 10019

764-HERO - We're Solids, CDEP This is a seven song EP done by a two piece, noisy post-punk band from the great NW. If you're into it, I guess it's ok, for me however, the day is suitably filled with other things. (TOM) Suicide Squeeze Records 4505 University Way NE PO Box 434 Seattle, WA 98105

THE LETTER A

Alderknot - Barn Over Load, LP The cover to this record is pretty cool, artwork that I could picture being produced by the spawn of some unclean artistic union of Pablo Picasso and Gahan Wilson. The music was kind of generic. Start newer Gaunt -- zippy, punky, but severely flawed. Mix in touches of Slint and you should have a good idea of what's happening. (GG) Break Even Point via Vallebona 28 00166 Rome, Italy

All Else Failed - A Most Bitter Season, CD From the looks of the cover and the name of the band upon seeing this in the stores, my guess was that it was going to be slow and boring metal. I was halfway correct. This band is indeed metal, but not in the way that causes me to instantly take the CD out of the player. From start to finish, All Else Failed pummels the listener with powerful and chaotic elements that bring to mind tiny hints of

Threadbare, Deadguy and others in a similar vein. The lyrics and the artwork are well put together and disturbing, but only in that good. Temperance has got a winner here folks! (BR) Temperance Records, P.O. Box 685, Northfield, NJ 08225 or Tied Down Records, P.O. Box 134, Lansdowne, PA 19050

All Natural Lemon And Lime Flavors - Catcher / Spaun, 7" Before receiving this record, I knew nothing of this band except that they have something available from Gern Blandsten and I honestly haven't been into what Gern Blandsten has been doing in recent months. From the sound of these two songs, this bears no exception. Maybe I'm not looking deep enough, but these songs appear way too light and breezy for someone who prefers all that is abrasive. I will say that it has a certain creative flair that says that there is an audience out there for this, it just doesn't include me. (BR) Rocket Science Records, 85 Veterans Pkwy., Pearl River, NY 10965

The Angel Assassins - S/T, 7" This is dissonant hardcore noise with aggressive, throat-tearing screaming, it's not frantic or fast enough to be called grindcore, but decidedly leaning in that direction. Maybe this is what Assfactor 4 would sound like if they were really into death metal. The music and vocals sound dark and evil. The packaging has really good design, and you get your punk rock value: Five songs on a 7". Definitely a good record. (SM) Hymnal Sounds, 1892A Market St., San Francisco, CA 94102

Atom and His Package - A Society of People Named Elihu, CD Some people, myself included, have loosely thrown around the term "nerd," using it to describe all kinds of things that don't really qualify for nerdiness. However, using the term to describe Atom and His Package would not, by any stretch, be inappropriate. For those who remember the late great pop punk band Fracture, Atom was the guy who occasionally chimed in with the high-pitched nasal backing vocals. That band long gone, Atom teamed up with His Package--a sequencer, with which he programs fairly complex electronic songs and sings over them. You haven't experienced nerdcare until you hear Atom cover Fugazi's "Waiting Room" and Youth of Today's "Break Down the Walls." Or check out some of his originals, with titles like "Sting Cannot Possibly Be the Same Guy Who Was in the Police," "People in this Computer Lab Should Shut the Hell Up," and "Me and My Black Metal Friends." It even includes a birthday tribute to Ralph of the band Franklin ("Happy birthday Ralph, I love you, even though you are fucking

disgusting"). And he throws in an old Fracture song for good measure. The full-color cover and thick booklet of the CD also are awesome, except for the hard-to-read block letter font used for the words. This CD is hilarious, charming, completely original and awesome. Yay. (SM) Mountain/Suzuki Beane, P.O. Box 220320, Greenport P.O., Brooklyn, NY 11222-9997

The Audience - S/T, LP Man, this record is really hard to describe. I hate to put what I feel the influences are, because most people, most often disagree with me. However, I have to try here. It's like Wire, Talking Heads, and Devo all got together to jam. A lot of great sounds, but not necessarily all great together. That's kind of how I felt here. At times this record was quite amazing, at times it was quite irritating. Some were on the mark, others really too damn long for their own good (one side had just three songs). The packaging itself blew chunks, as there not only were no lyrics included, but no song titles either. In the end, I can think of a couple of songs that might get some play with me, which really isn't enough to recommend this. (TOM) Hymnal 1892A Market San Francisco, CA 94102

August Spies - S/T, 7" Live (?) Recording of crusty Boston drunks. OK for the style. Lyrics are fairly political but not very intelligent (but not necessarily dumb either). (GG) Rodent PO Box 335 Newton Ctr., MA 02159

THE LETTER B

The Basement Brats - It's All Right, 7" Hailing from Norway the Basement Brats bring you two top choice cuts across the Atlantic. Very Ramones/Queers inspired, not a bad place to be. I haven't heard this sound as much lately and that is good. Leave it to bands that can pull it off, like this one. The B-side is a little off track though. Its got the ska beat that you heard a lot in post 1977-1979 UK music. Again though somehow they pull it off. While you order this, get the wonderful Underground Medicine catalog from the same address, really it doesn't have a bad record in it. (EA) Rapid Pulse PO Box 5075 Milford, CT 06460

Bedford - A million ways to spend my time, 7" Hmmm...if you like what Less Than Jake is doing minus the ska, you may like this band. Ramones influenced at times, fast pop punk with screaming back-ups. Well produced, tight pop-punk with songs about girls...girls...more songs about girls... (DV) Keystone-Ember PO Box 1798 Wilkes-Barre, PA 18703

REVIEWS

DAVENPORT (MD), MARK HANFORD (MH), NATE WILSON (NW), PATTI KIM (PK), SCOTT MACDONALD (SM), THE OLD MAN (TOM)

Beltaine -Crowning the Caged Kid, CD While not masters of the harmonic dynamic indie-rock sound like Fugazi, these guys have it going on right. They've got some excellent dynamics, with nice noisy pieces of discordant melody and quite more introspective mellow moments. Excellent release from a band I hope to hear more from. (MH) Atomic Action! Records

Bloody Sods - Up and Running, LP I would figure these guys belong on GMM, they play punk as fuck songs that would also appeal to skins. Most of the songs are mid paced or fast. Good production and decent layout. The lyrics in one song I found offensive though—in "Farakhan" the verse says "If I call you a migger it don't mean I hate every member of your race." At the same time they have other songs about fighting racial prejudice. Very questionable lyrics—I would never throw the term "igger" around this loosely. (NW) Step 1 Music PO Box 21, Tenterdorn, Kent TN30 722 UK

The Bristles - Lifestyles of the Poor and Unknown, LP Every city has a band like this: part street punk, part pop part Killed by Death. Normally they stay local never being able to afford a van that will make it out of state. The Bristles must have a rich Aunt or something cause they sure have made a name across the map. They do this formula well and give you working class beer swilling anthems for a Friday night. Nice production and energy make this heads above the typical street release. Check out these song titles: Blue Collar Crime, Pills and Alcohol, Nowhereville, Bricks and Bottles. (EA) Beer City PO Box 26035 Milwaukee, WI 53226

THE LETTER C

The Candysnatchers - Dead and Alive, 7" Oh! Andy Slob does some fine work once again. Really order the whole Centsless catalog. Only the Candysnatchers would have the guts and balls to back up a single that starts off with a Dead Boys Track. Gotta love em or hate em. The best part is that it has a way better sound then their full length. Plus three tracks is about all you should listen to at once from these guys anyway, get this one. (EA) Centsless Productions 5945 Monticello Ave. Cincinnati, OH 45224

Cards in Spokes - React, CD Alright, lets see here.... fast melodic punk, nice harmonies, catchy choruses all by two brothers whose last name is "beer". Pretty darn good. These guys are a cut above your average melodic punk band, using their harmonic abilities for the powers of good. All of the songs are catchy as hell, and will keep you

humming for quite a while. The lyrics are very wordy but I never found them annoying. Contains a really good anti-drug song which is always nice to hear. recommended. (JK) Allied PO Box 460683, San Francisco, CA 94146

Cash Money - Halos of Smoke and Fire, LP Drum and guitar duos have to be very careful. One mistake can be very costly, because few people have the patience for a bad band in the minimalist genres. Cash Money, while having what I would call a good band name wank way too much. The key to drum and guit duos is to rock. Rock is the key brothers and sisters, and should be goal numero uno. Look at Bantam Rooster (who fucking rule) or Chrome Cranks. Even the Epitaph released 20 Miles is pretty good. All those bands rock. Cash Money need to do the same. (GG) Touch and Go

Casualties - VML Live, 7" Just what the world needs. Another live 7." Not as bad as I expected from these NYC drunk fucks. The production is not bad and actually held my interest. (NW) VML PO Box 183 Franklin Park, IL 60131

Cletus - Protein Packed, CD Fat Wreck Chords music with snot punk vocals. And I don't know how he does it, but somehow Mass Giorgini manages to make every band he records sound like Squirtgun. (MD) Johannis Face PO box 479164 Chicago, IL 60647

Coalesce / The Get Up Kids split, 7" With so many styles all being categorized as hardcore these days, the combination of these two bands on one record is hardly a surprise. What did surprise me was the Coalesce song. It honestly left me a little unfulfilled. It sounds like much of their newer material but lacks some of the unrelenting power. It almost has a bit of a rockin' quality to it and doesn't rely on the insane tempo changes of other recordings. I enjoyed the first Get Up Kids single somewhat but I feel that they are really overrated. This song blends qualities of poppy punk and the famous "midwest" sound but there are others who do it better. The best part about their side of the record is hearing such happy music coupled with such bitter lyrics. Mediocre at best. (BR) Second Nature P.O. Box 11543, Kansas City, MO 64138

THE LETTER D

Dawnbreed/World Inferno - Apollo Raumklang/Tattoos Fade split, 7" Wow, this 7" is pretty rad. I don't even know how to do justice in describing The World/Inferno Friendship

Society. Like Nick Cave with a choirfull of little devils offering backing vocals? It is cool. And then Dawnbreed pick up the pace with their crazy hardcore offering. I like it lots! Oh, and the packaging here is real, real nice. These kids have got the shwank in their shanks. (PK) X-Mist, PO Box 1545, 72195 Nagold, Germany

The Decibels - Create Action!, CD Very beat style music, with some early Beatles (minus the edge) and maybe some Kinks thrown your way. This sound is getting done to death lately and I think that the Decibels are a fine band but nothing that will grab you, make you wanna dance, or anything special. I can only imagine that they stomp live. I hope so cause I like the schtick just it doesn't come across on this compact disc. (EA) GI Productions PO Box 6948 San Jose CA 95150

Decoy - Volv, CD Okay, would somebody please tell me WHY some bands out there send their pukkey to Punk Planet for review?! Tell me PLEASE!!! And is it just me, or is there like a renaissance of pix of bare-breasted D-cup women on records these days? What the fug? If I wanted SEXXXEE, I would listen to the new UNWOUND motherfuckers. Goddamn! (PK) Decoy, 1-44 Grove Ave., Toronto ON, M6J 3B6 Canada

The Deflowers - Fin, CD Here's some pure POP music put forth by four geeky-looking boys (Hey! That's a compliment!). This will make you feel good if you're feeling kind of blue. You can tell that these guys must spend a lot of time crafting their songs just so. It goes from quiet sigh-sigh moments to full-on rockout sessions. I would say if you're into the musical likes of Pavement or Number One Cup, then this would certainly be worth checking out. If not, then stay the fug away. (PK) Square Target, PO Box 19673, Seattle WA, 98109

Deniz Tek Group - Le Bonne Route Ouch, I know I wouldn't pat attention to this except with that name, its tough. Pick up the first two Radio Birdman LPs instead and if you are still interested in this man's solo stuff get this. The production is top, loud guitars and well written songs just a little to rock and less of that energy and on the edge that Raio Birdman had. (EA) Citadel Records 2217 Nicollet Ave. Mpls MN, 55404

Devola - Playing the Game of..., LP 15 songs in 18 minutes -- you gotta love it! Cross Charles Bronson (vox) with CR (music) and you have an idea of what you're dealing with. Wicked hectic tempo changes and blasts of discordant noise keep me listening. Thrashy, punchy HC that has a bit of

the Long Island sound. A cool listen. (NW)
Mountain PO Box 220320 Greenpoint Post Office
Brooklyn, NY 11222

Dillinger Four - More Songs about Girlfriends and Bubblegum, 7" Still pretty poppy, but not without a touch of anger, Dillinger Four manage to stay punk while continuing to rock. If you are into the fast, semi-melodic, "throw yourself into the mosh pit" punk rock, then, by golly, do not hesitate to trade your money in for this 7". (MD)
Mutant Pop, 5010 NW Shasta, Corvallis, OR 97330

Dirt Bike Annie - Letters and Numbers +3, 7" High quality pop punk from these New Yorkers. The B-side is more upbeat and interesting than the A, with a nice interplay between male and female vocals and bouncier music. Not quite a good as the other 7" I've heard by them, but still worthwhile. First 500 on purple vinyl. (MH)
Mutant Pop, 5010 NW Shasta, Corvallis OR 97330

The Drags - VML Live, 7" Uck, horrible sound on this one. Everyone always says that these VML live are for fans only. Well I am a fan of the Drags and I still think this is too rough on my ears. Maybe after the LP has worn its grooves out I will listen to this. You get six songs, outta tune, outta sync and outta the record player. (EA)
VML Records PO Box 183 Franklin Park IL 60131

THE LETTER E

Electric Summer - Shock, CD Imagine if the Registrators were raised on Descendents instead of UK power pop. Take All, turn em Japanese and produce them by Bill Stevenson. Genius on one level and total idiocy on another. A pop album that I can really appreciate. Japan is doing it better again. (EA)
Soda Jerk Records PO Box 4056 Boulder, CO 80306

Epileptix - Underground Sounds, 7" The first time I heard of this band was in a trip down to Detroit, MI. We were playing a show and I am in the bathroom taking a piss and the lead singer comes up to me and tries to sell me his new bands single side by side at the urinals. Idiot couldn't even have waited for me to shake. It was one of the most punk things I have seen in a long time. I almost pissed on his shoes to make a point. He probably would have loved it. Well, this record is so Killed By Death, Doc Dart, Crucifix that it rules. Totally crude, sing along stupid punk rock. "Disco Slut" has been in my head all night. This has ever trick of mid-eighties punk that we ever learned and loved. If not for the fun factor, get it for the great music. True drunk punk with intelligence. (EA)
GMM Records PO Box 15234 Atlanta, GA 30333

THE LETTER F

Fake Hyppi - Start a New Game ?, CD Here's a band that plays a melodic sort of tune. The music is played well, but lyrically something annoyed me. Sort of, in the way that I want to say "you missed the point completely" (this is said solely as a critique

and not an attack). I see someone frustrated with things and wishes they were a way that could be happy for all, which I can agree with in one sense or another, but the analysis to move forward is ignorant and with further exploration could be manipulated for righteous means. So if your into the Graymatter "thog" LP, you might be interested in this CD, for it is similar in ways. (EF)
Fake Inc. 11 Rue Lejeune 31000 Toulouse (I think France, it's not listed)

First Class - Beer Fueled Mayhem, 7" Pretty bad production on this HC/Oi slab. Songs about killing everyone and drinking beers. Pretty stupid photos of skinheads with Marines shirts on standing in front of the American Flag. Not my thing. (NW)
Fourth Dimension 268 Hollywood Ave. Yonkers, NY 10707

Fluffer - wreck (+2), CD Bjork? (MD)
Fear of Nebraska; 155 east 23rd St. suite 305, new York, NY 10010

Food - Old Ruled World, 7" Well, this vocals are in English, the lyric sheet is all in French, and the music is noisy, melodic, hardcore. They have that DC repetitive style to them which I have to admit I like (style-wise). I was asked to mention that folks should get in contact for trading purposes and emphasis is placed on getting in contact first. There are two songs to this release, and mine came on a nice yellowish/lime color vinyl. (EF)
Spore! Noise Experiment Records C/O Thocherie Henri-Pierre 14 Rue Mordret - Appt 15 72000 Le Mans - France

Four Letter Word - A Nasty Piece of Work. LP More upbeat pop punk that seems to plague the world these days. I would think they're from CA, but actually its the UK. (NW)
BYO PO Box 67A64 Los Angeles, CA 90067

Fur - Don't Need No Christmas Tree, 7" Real rock and rollers, its Fur baby. I have had a single buried in my collection for a long time and never saw anything else by em except for a comp track or two along the line. A little late for the Christmas song, plus it is a mellow slow uninspired song that can only be justified on a mixed tape at X-mas time. The flip is a throw away Fur theme song written in the studio that is actually catchy as hell. (EA)
Blackout! PO Box 1575 NYC, NY 10009

The Fuses - Dress for the New Bomb, 7" I would safe to say that these guys are a little older and grew up on some Australian punk (ala Saints) and UK stuff (Clash, Stranglers, Wire, Magazine?). The songwriting is quality, each song has hooks throughout and all three songs fly by, like they are only a minute long. Each songs grabs you and you will not turn this single off half way through. Impressive debut featuring members of Webster, another American Punk product. Excited to see more from these boys of Baltimore. (EA)
American Punk 802 S. Broadway Baltimore, MD 21231

THE LETTER G

Genuine - The Pessimist Project, CD This is, unmistakably, straight-edge hardcore; in all its cliched glory. The music isn't bad -- it's heavy and

thick, the songs are structured well and the vocals are pretty decent. But with lyrics like, "I've watched so many people fall, promises made ... they broke them all," how can this be taken seriously? (SM)
Temperance Records, P.O. Box 685, Northfield, NJ 08225

Getting Off - Scott Free, CD Without any second guess, it did not take long to figure out that this record was not my cup of tea. It has some punk elements about it but the vocals annoy in a way only bad industrial music can. Actually, I can see this appealing to the Wax Trax type of audience but it instantly bored me to tears. (BR)
Leather / Western Records, P.O. Box 11980, Chicago, IL 60611

God Awful - S/T, 7" Another NYU band (joining the Beastie Boys and Jawbreaker) 80's sXe sound a la Wide Awake, but not I the vein of Fastbreak or Rain on the Parade who totally ape the sound of years past. They are inspired, but don't copy it. OK, not godly at all. (I should add that someone in the band knows my friend Chris who was going to play bass for the band, but didn't. He's sticking to his turntable and mixer instead.) (CG)
Town Hall Records PO Box 974 Harriman, NY 10926

Good Riddance/Reliance - split, 7" Good Riddance 3D power pop. For those of you who have not heard them, they sound like the Mighty Mighty Bosstones without the horn section and ska tendencies. Reliance is a bit faster, but still in the same realm of power pop punkness. If you like to skate, wished you skate, or just like skaters, this seven inch beckoning you. (MD)
Little Deputy Records; PO box 7066 Austin, TX 78713-7066

Grade - Separate the Magnets, CD Grade blew me away! Tight hardcore songs that tend to get really melodic at times; melodic in a sense of screaming vocals and metalish music blend into a more poppy like vocals with poppy music. Some bands can't seem to do this right, but Grade does it. This CD contains 7 tracks with somewhat political lyrics. (DV)
Second Nature PO Box 11543 Kansas City, MO 64138

THE LETTER H

Hissy Fit - Shut up and Play..., CD To avoid any confusion, this is not the Hissy Fit from Canada, these are the high-school pop punk power trio from California. Three chord melodic pop music with melodic vocals, a bit lo-fi and very catchy. (MD)
Double Play Records; 41 Sutter St. suite 1337, SF, CA 94104

Horace Goes Skiing - Domestic Violence, 7" The catalog which accompanied this 7" described Horace Goes Skiing as an "insanely melodic, harmony soaked, UK pop band." That pretty much sums them up, so if you are interested in "four strong, solid, hook filled tunes," waste no time, my friend. (MD)
Pop kid, 16 Raleigh Ln., Wayne, NJ 07470

Hot Water Music – Alachua/Never Ender, 7"

Nice packaging on this one. A cut out cover with a live photo coming through. Most of you know this band already and I like to akin them to mid-eighties Dischord on the whole Swiz/DC scene, except Hot Water Music have a little less high end metal and more low end metal sound with a heavy feel to it. The vocals are what makes this above most of the crappy singles which we must endure month after month. I will say that Allied has some winners. (EA)

Allied PO Box 460683 SF CA 94146-0683

THE LETTER I**I Love Rich - Live, Wet, Drippin' with Sex, LP**

The title has a heart in it instead of love, but I'm not sure we can print that here at Emo Planet, so I changed it to 'love.' It doesn't matter though. This band is damn near awful. The recording is done to seem live, with audience banter mixed in. Never a good idea. The only band able to pull it off: the Devil Dogs. And rule #1 in the punk handbook: "Don't fuck with the Devil Dogs." Top it with sexist liner notes and you have garbage dump material. (GG)

Big Dump Records

Ire - S/T, 7" Here's a release from a group of Cannucks that is suitable for the ears, and pleasurable fulfilling. The double bass is potent and the riffs are metal as can be. This has a definite Canadian / Quebec sound to it. If you are familiar with the past few years worth of Canadian metal, you would understand their place in its history. I will also give them credit for being really good at what they do, and the sound is full as well as driven with energy. One of the problems I have with many bands of this genre is that a lot of the time the vocals are poorly placed into the songs, and that is what Ire avoids beautifully. So they have excelled beyond one of my many pet-peeves, and can be approved by me to you, purchase and live peacefully. (EF)

Schema PO Box 1161 Battle Creek, MI 49016-1161

THE LETTER J

Jeff Dahl - Heart Full of Snot, LP Lame old guy punk rocker, and I'm not talking Tim Yo or Jello. People still like those guys. But Jeff Dahl sucks absolutely here. Actually, he might not even be old. Who cares. This is lame. File it away with your Metal Mike 7"s and pray to god some used record store will give you \$2 trade for it. (GG)

Triple XXX

j/e/n w/o/o/d - Getting Past the Static, CD

Moody melodic female with a moody melodic guitar (and no bass or drums on most songs). She sings with that whisper thing that seems to prevail in this type of folkie indie rock. Nice background music when I'm in a mellow mood. For a mainstream comparison, think of the mellow Liz Phair songs. (MH)

Win Records, Post Box 26811, LA CA 90026

THE LETTER K

Kil Kare - S/T, CD This rocks the casbah like nothing else. I know that it's never good to compare a band to someone else, but on a lot of these songs sound like Sonic Youth when Thurston Moore is singing. The band uses an upright bass which is really swingin' and the art-noise stuff they do never over-powers the groove. My only real complaint is that it's only eight songs long. Comes in a really nifty booklet type thing. Real spiffy. (JK)

Blackberry press PO box 2556 Portland, Oregon 97208

Knucklehead - Another Neurotic Episode, CD

These Calgarian punk rockers remind me of an early Rancid with a touch of cheesy 80's rock and a bit of Fat Wreck Chords. Oi Canada! (MD)

Melodiya; 2523 17th Avenue SW Calgary AB, Canada T3E 0A2

Kung Fu Monkeys- Shindig, 7" If all of the Queers' songs were super bubble gum pop, they would be the Kung Fu Monkeys. Very catchy, very dorky, and a bit lo-fi, this 7" is sure to shake up your next sock hop. Who needs more than three chords anyway? (MD)

Mutant Pop, 5010 NW Shasta, Corvallis, OR 97330

THE LETTER L

The Last Crime - s/t, CD This band features Kevin Egan of the defunct 1.6 Band. This was the second thing I gave a listen to and gave me more assurance I had some good things to review. There are 4 tracks, (+1 hidden track) in this CD, but its more than an EP. Some songs stretch to 8 minutes of intense emotional music. Tight, melodic and a great listen. Too bad no lyrics were included... (DV)

The Omega PO Box 558 Village Station New York, NY 10014 \$7PPD

Leatherface - Cherry Knowle, LP This Band Rocked the UK for years and by the time I discovered them through a friend, they had broken up. Their music can be described as aggressive melodic punk rock. Imagine the more aggressive Jawbreaker songs with more gruff like vocals. The word is, they just got back together, so their 1st LP is available on vinyl again! Lyrics are catchy as they cover class, race, war issues. If you missed them the 1st time around, do not miss them again! This record is something NOT to be passed up!!! (Believe me, every penny of \$10 is worth it!) (DV)

Bottleneck PO Box 11794 Berkley, CA 94712-2794 \$10PPD

Left For Dead / Ochre - split, 7" My oh my, how I have waited to tell someone about this record. Ever since being mailed a tape of the Left For Dead demo, I have banged my head to their songs on a daily basis. These five songs bear no exception. Combine the metallic crunch of Chokehold's "Instilled" 7" and the speed of bands like Spazz and top it off with incredibly pessimistic lyrics and you have the greatest band to ever come out of Canada. On the flipside, Ochre is still up to the same formula that could have made them

great. Admittedly, the Ochre 7" is far superior to these songs but these songs are superior to most of what is considered good that is coming out of the hardcore scene these days. Nothing fancy, just really fucking good. (BR)

Phyte Records, P.O. Box 14228, Santa Barbara, CA 93107

Lollipop - Live at Reptilian Records, 7"

Man, this cover is enough to induce color blindness! Day-glo looking pink and blue, wow! As the title suggests, this is a live record. The quality of the recording is pretty damn good. It includes just two songs, which is kind of sad, but the two songs are indeed very rocking in that old Detroit rock kind of way. (TOM)

Reptilian 403 S. Broadway Baltimore, MD 21231

The Long Gones - Heads or Tails, 7"

Smokes, smokin, smokin, smokin. Do you get it. The second record that I highly endorse this month alone that was recorded in Andy Slob's basement. Four high tone blasters comparable to the late Pagans or the New Bomb Turks. It most be in the Ohio water or something. The Long Gones make us proud. Their name as well as spirit taken from the classic Customs song "Long Gone" made more recently famous by the Devil Dogs. You know what you are getting with tracks like: Heads or Tails, Ditch that Bitch, Dragstrip Tonight and Time on My Hands. Total cruisin and bruising. (EA)

Shake It 4136 Florida Ave. Cincinnati, OH 45223

The Loudmouths/Sex Offenders - split, 7"

The Loudmouths can do little wrong, and this split goes to prove it. The female/male vocals go together so well. They play snot punk better than anyone these days. Their New Red Archive LP isn't that impressive but every single or split or comp track have been scorching. The Sex Offenders come in at a respectable second, but their street punk doesn't quite have the power (and lacks the duality of vocals) that the Loudmouths deliver. Two great sides, four great songs, makes this my stone cold lock of the month. (EA)

Main Squeeze Records PO Box 45411 Kansas City, MO 64171

THE LETTER M

Mad - Molsell, CD A record filled with 50's garage by a band from Japan. Not surprisingly for the period, this thing has plenty of country overtones to it. The singer reminds me of an over the top Teenegenerate singer wanna be, without the music to back it up. It's too much and at the same time not enough for me. (TOM)

Blossom Japanese Underground Music, 369-B Third Street #320 San Rafael, CA 94901

Maggot Sandwich - Sleaze Factor, CD A little bit of everything on this lo-fi trash punk release - psychobilly, dirge, scummy rock, and other music of questionable quality. This is what good music is - not that overproduced crap that passes for punk nowadays. Most people probably won't like this, but then most people are shit anyway. (MH)

KML Records,

Magnatone - s/t, CD It's Friday night. The parents are just leaving the house and you begin calling everyone you know to come over for a party. As the house begins filling up with people, many decide they want to listen to some music and dance. You walk over to the stereo and pop in the Magnatone. Instantly, the guests get worked into a frenzy while the surf rock style of this CD brings out the party animal in all. Soon, the police arrive and everyone is told to go home. At school on Monday, the discussion insures concerning where the people who attended the party can get their own copy of Magnatone. It rocked my party and it just might do so for yours. (BR)
No Alternative Records, 2217 Nicollet Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55404

Matty and Max - split, 7" An acoustic punk rock seven inch from the folks at Probe Records and a member of Hickey; the band which, incidentally, win my award for the loudest live show in the world. Matty, of Hickey, plays three live poppy songs about girls and drugs and self-destruction. They're really funny on their own, but with the heckling crowd audible in the background they get even funnier. Max, not of Hickey, plays one sad sappy song, recorded in a kitchen. All songs consist of only acoustic guitar and vocals. A cool, enjoyable little record. (SM)
Probe Records, P.O. Box 5068, Pleasanton, CA 94566

Mid Carson July - Minus Wings and Halo, 7" I guess this is what happens after HC kids get mature and try to play "real" music. This is way way emo-indy-rock. (NW)
Keystone-Ember Recordings PO Box 1798 Wilkes Barre, PA 18703

Milhouse - Obscenity in the Milk, CD Okay, on this one, I'll admit it. It's pretty good, but the press release that came with it was really funny. It described this thing like there was nothing else like it around, it was supposedly non-categorizable, it was a new innovation in taking hardcore to a new level. Well, it's definitely not that at all. What it is, is good hardcore played well. These chaps are definitely good at what they do, but to no means do they bring the show to your living room. So if you buy this CD, make sure the press release didn't come with it. I like it that they used a sample from the movie/documentary Roger and Me (if you haven't seen it, do so), if you have to pick rent the movie first and buy the CD with the left-over money if there is any (time to prioritize kids, lets make a difference). (EF)
Wreck-Age PO BOX 263, New York, NY 10012

Mondo Topless - Amazon Queen, 7" Mondo Topless with their Vox organ and all aren't even close to a band like the Lyres, but are a damn fine band anyway. Very garage/lo-fi with vocals that you can understand. The production seems to hold back the rawness that this deserves. The A-side "Amazon Queen" is a stomper that deserves the A-side title while the two B-side tracks seem too formulated or forced. (EA)
GI Productions PO Box 6948 San Jose CA 95150

The Moons - Stolen Days/Step Back, 7" Twangy power pop with a touch of mellow ballad. Not punk, in the punk sense but in the eighties Big Star or Hitchcock sense or even a 60s thumper. If you are a Jawbreaker fan don't buy this because Adam Pfahler is drumming cause most of the youngins won't like this. Cool if you like stuff like the Romantics, Taxi Boys or other 80s power pop. (EA)
\$3 Broken Rekkids PO Box 460402 SF CA 94146

Murder 1 - Shopping for Porn, LP Dumb hard punk in a Black Flag vein, but shit. Some songs have finger picking, which makes sense considering the band features a well known major label metal radio promotion guy who pimps it on corporate radio. (GG)
NMG Records PO Box 50550 Phoenix, AZ 85076

THE LETTER N

Nerves - S/T, CD The third song is definitely the one I like the most. That's not to say that the others are not good, because I really like the whole CD. It's definitely the best thing of all the things I reviewed this time around. The have a late 70's no-wave feel to them, mixed with early to mid '80 DC sound. Actually, they also remind me of Circus Lupus, and since I really like Circus Lupus, then I will obviously like the Nerves. Good release from this Chicago band. (EF)
Thrill Jockey PO BOX 478794 Chicago IL 60647

No Class - It's A Wonderful Life, 7" This reminds me of something that would have been put out by Mystic Records, had this band existed at that time. There is no "pop" to be found anywhere with this group. No Class is punk rock, right down to the letter. In it's finer moments, it brings to light small doses of F.Y.P. when they played snotty, thrashy punk rock but unfortunately, No Class isn't as witty as F.Y.P. and I don't see me ever really enjoying this record the way I do the aforementioned. This is for those mohawked types who can't get enough of "the pit". (BR)
Big House Records, 214 Bayview St. #2, San Rafael, CA 94901

NoMeansNo - Would we be Alive, CDEP Not exactly new stuff from the No gang, but it does contain songs that you probably don't have. Why? This four song, 20 minute EP features songs that were either released on European 7"s or on comps. So what's the likelihood you have it? That's what I figured. Anyway, songs one and three are about as dark as you could ever handle it. Slow stuff that prominently features the drums and bass. The other two songs are a little more upbeat. Hahaha. A definite treat for those dark gloomy days. (TOM)
Alternative Tentacles, PO Box 419092 San Francisco, CA 94141-9092

THE LETTER O

Okara / Mothman - Split, 7" The Mothman side was the side that I listened to first, and I have to say, that it's just not my cup o' tea. There are bands that do that sound that I do like and the first that comes to thought is Hoover, but this has

a faster tempo to it, and just doesn't hit me in the right way. The Okara side doesn't do much for me either. It has that sound that was really big on the west coast around '93, but it lacks something that I can't put my finger on, oh I think its energy. The record has one of those big hole, and they don't bother me for the most part, except on days like today when I cannot find the adapter. (EF)
Rocket Science Records 85 Veterans Parkway, Pearl River NY 10965

Otomo Yoshihide - Sound Factory (1997), CD At first, I wanted to say that this could be an acquired taste but with only two songs that clock in at over 20 minutes a piece; each containing ear-piercing noise, I cannot see anyone being capable of appreciating this. This might go over well at a club but I don't know too many rave kids reading Punk Planet, except for Valiant in Buffalo. Troubling. (BR)
Gentle Giant Records, P.O. Box 50013, Kalamazoo, MI 49005

Out - Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Songs, 7" This band sounds like a hybrid of AC/DC and the New Bomb Turks. Dirty metal with speedy garage sounds and throaty, gravel vocals. The songs get right to the point and are played well. This is definitely not what I expected from the cover, which is done in a pleasant shade of pink. (SM)
Noise Pollution, P.O. Box 72189, Louisville, KY 40272

Oxblood - Crime Stories, LP Oi-ville here. NYC street stuff. Hard oi I guess is the term. Pretty violent stuff, and generally not my bag. One member is African American, a too rare event which always makes me smile. I was turned onto punk by a grade school friend who was Nigerian. I just wish there was a greater African American presence in the scene. I guess we ca dream... (GG)
Punkcore Records PO Box 916 Middle Island, NY 11953

THE LETTER P

The Panoply Academy Glee Club - S/T, 7" At times, this sounds like the Nation Of Ulysses on bad drugs. The music is chaotic, the guitars make strange sounds, the vocals are weird and hard to get used to. This is a very eclectic record. I like it. (SM)
Ape Records, P.O. Box 1584, Bloomington, IN 47402

The Party of Helicopters/In Ano - split, 7" In Ano puts in one angry hardcore song with repetitive screaming and one with samples playing over soft then loud hardcore. It's pretty interesting stuff, and this might be the last of it because the band has broken up. Party Of Helicopters go from brutal and driving to chaotic and melodic. The songs are quick -- four on one side of a 7". More good stuff. A quality record. (SM)
Ape Records, P.O. Box 1584, Bloomington, IN 47402

Plainfield - A Tribute to Britpop, 7" This is definitely not what I was expecting from Plainfield, a band I've never heard before but know as the kings of redneck-core. The first song is a slow, sparse number with spoken vocals about outlandish

farm-related things. The second is a soft, tender deal lamenting a girl or something. Both songs are very weird. (SM)
Crippled Dick Hot Wax, P.O. Box 3864, 78027 VS-Schwenningen, Germany.

Poem Rocket - Desire Illuminated, 7" Noise pop? Yes. They combine the instrumentation of other noise pop bands (a la Corduroy, etc.) add a touch of Sonic Youth and top off their sound with Alice in Chains reminiscent vocals. I think that I would like it more, much more, without the would-be harmonic singing. The music itself is pretty rad though and has an abstract quality that makes me feel like I am floating through space, watching melting clocks and people I knew from junior high school pass me by. (MD)
Magic Eye Singles; box 6165 Baltimore, MD 21231

The Primate 5 - The Nova EP, 7" Might as well be the ultimate band to open up for the Mummies. You gotta love the Primate 5, they get the organ to kick out once in awhile and play Budget rock the way it should be. Hell I don't want to spoil this review anymore, just buy anything and everything with the Primate 5 name on it. (EA)
GI Productions PO Box 6948 San Jose CA 95150

Primrods - Six Flags, 7" Real boring indy rock

THE LETTER R

stuff, mid paced. (GG)
Melodiya 2523 17th Ave., SW Calgary AB Canada

Roosevelt - Spine, 7" It is one of those emo-president bands that I always had a hard time telling apart, Hoover / Franklin / Roosevelt... Anyway, this is a good emo mid-nineties record. Recorded in 1995 this was probably the high point of this scene in my opinion. Three tracks all treading the territory of guitar hooks a plenty, this is filled with probably too much talent for its own good. These days things are a lot more mellow and don't have the edge these bands did. Pick this up in place of your Promise Ring single this month. (EA)
Boxcar Records PO Box 1141 Melbourne, IL 32902-1141

Rootes Group Service - 48 Thrills, 7" High octave, drag racing, super sled, nitro burning, Childish inspired, punk rockin, 50s rollin, tires squeelin, rubber burning, full throttle, and that is the A-side. Don't even need to turn it over to the B-side. Makers fans take note. (EA)
Square Target PO Box 19673 Seattle, WA 98177

Roxylocks - Good Luck Sucker, CD I highly recommend this CD to anyone who is a fan of the late Jawbreaker. An off brand of power pop and melodic tendencies give roxylocks a different sound from other recent pop groups. (MD)
Minor Label Records 16480 Soda Springs Rd Los Gatos, CA 95033

Run for Your Fucking Life - S/T, 7" I always like the colored vinyl. Don't know why for sure, guess it

adds a little pizzazz to the dark dreary days of winter. It doesn't add any points to the content, but in those cases where the music's good, it adds a nice finishing touch. So I guess I should talk about its content. Overall it is pretty decent blazing HC, with lyrics railing against the rich, and the typical lyrical fare. Not a necessity, but not bad either. (TOM)
Ataxia Records, PO Box 220 4364 Bonita Rd. Bonita, CA 91902

Rusty James - S/T, LP The insert compares this band to Weezer. That's your prepackaged musical lighthouse. Dig it. My opinion says their sound is nothing groundbreaking, just un-pop emo-indy rock. (GG)
Love Wulwester 11 28203 Bremen, Germany

Ruth's Hat - Too Much Box, 7" Buzzsaw melodic pop-punk the way it's meant to be done. Abso-fucking-lutely head-boppin', butt-wigglin', speed(like)-frenzy-inducing pop punk that puts most of the bands in that genre to shame. What a wonderful seven, and on red wax no less! (MH)
Spank Records, 44 N. Deeplands, Grosse Pointe Shores, MI 48236

THE LETTER S

Sackville - These Last Songs, CD Awww, this CD is so country-pretty, it's enough to warm all of your little chunk o' coal hearts. Comprised of ex and ongoing members of Howard North, Pest 5000, Sofa, Mudfish, Picastro (and others I'm sure), it all makes for a powerhouse of musical talents and sensibilities. Songs here that make me sigh in a good way: Upstate, Bender, and especially Invisible Ink—such a lovely song! If you're already into moody bands like Palace, Slint, or Codeine (or any music that goes rilly well with alcohol), then you have to give Sackville a whirl. So good! (PK)
Mag Wheel, PO Box 115, Stn. R, Montreal PQ, H2S 3K6 Canada

Samiam - You are Freaking Me Out, CD For a second there, they had me fooled, as I thought they had abandoned or been abandoned by the major labels. However, this puppy of a label is a major, hiding in indy clothing, with its owners and distribution channels reeking of it. The music itself is well polished, well played, and quite pleasing pop. It also has a little bang to it, with decent breaks and hooks. For me however, I'd rather buy something by someone who may not be quite as good, but has maintained some connection with the punk community. The decision however is yours. (TOM)
Ignition Records, 2112 Broadway 6th Floor New York, NY 10023

Schema - Sooner Than You Think, CD My roommate was really excited that I got this record for review, cause he heard a lot of good things about this band and wanted to hear this CD. I definitely don't have the same enthusiasm when listening to this CD as he does. It's not bad in any sense, but something that's not bad doesn't mean it's good either. Maybe when someone hypes something up for me I expect a lot out of it, and this just didn't do it, who knows. It has a standard melodic/emoish flow with bursts of intense parts,

and if that's what your into than this is for you, if that's not you than let this one collect dust in the store and not on your shelf. (EF)
Armed With Anger Records PO BOX 487, Bradford BD2 4YU. UK.

Screeching Weasel - S/T, CD If you have to ask what this is then you have been in the punk rock world for either a) forever or b) since Green Day started. This is the first legit re-release of this first SW LP in ten years. With some extra tracks this will attract all their fans. I don't know if you are hearing them for the first time it seems weak. Like Boogada but not as good. Hell, you already know if you want this. (EA)
VML Records PO Box 183 Franklin Park IL 60131

Scrub - Wake Up!, CD I can't decide if I like this or not. It's very rock n' rollish, it would fit in very well on any major city alternative radio station rotation, in the way that if you only have a radio in the car, you say to yourself, "jeez this must be the twentieth time today that I've heard this thing," oops, I think that statement was loaded. The lyrics strike me as really weird as well. At least they deal with issues. (EF)
Sol3 Records 522 East 6th Street, Suite GFW, New York, NY 10009

Sea of Cortez - S/T, 7" Another emo record to put on the list, that makes about 2.2 million of them. Slow, then fast, slow, fast, slow, fast, sing, scream, sing, scream, sing, scream, feedback, lots of feedback. I think I just wrote another song for this band. Their lyrics in one of their songs talks about surrealistic outlooks, the abstraction of reality. There's a philosophical perspective that just annoys the hell out of me. Because in this world what is real, and what is just a figment of our imagination? Our minds sure do work in perplexing ways. (EF)
Voice of the Sky PO BOX 10213 Columbus Oh 433201

Sea Scouts - Pattern Recognition, LP The first song on side A really, really sounded a lot like My Bloody Valentine musically. Overall, a somewhat low-fi album of melodic and noisy type music that left me wanting to listen to another record. (TOM)
Chapter Music, PO Box 4292 Melbourne University, Parkville VIC, Australia 3052

Secret Agent - From Conception to Execution, CD Manic alterna-rock with occasional moody parts. Excellent melodic guitar/bass interplay, and some very aggressive moments where the lead singer is singing/screaming his head off. Reminds me of some Six Finger Satellite stuff or Buttsteak. An excellent indie release. I wouldn't be surprised to find these guys on Touch & Go in the future. (MH)
Skull Geek Records, 339 A College St. PO Box 132, Toronto Ontario M5T 1S2 Canada

Shai Hulud - Hearts Once Nourished With Hope and Compassion, CD Another major related release, so since I've commented on that elsewhere, I'll pass here. This is good, cause I want to spend the remaining clicks of my keyboard saying how much I like this record. Shai Hulud, a Florida band, is amazing! They manage to pack

just about every genre of hardcore into their music, and what's more incredible, is that they do it with fluidity. The sometimes abrupt changes just seem so natural throughout this record. Can't tell you to buy or not buy this, but I can certainly say that I'm happy I got it for review. (TOM)
Crisis PO Box 5232 Huntington Beach, CA 92615

Shoot the Hostages - Shoot First Live Free!

7" It's a four songer that is filled with too much metal. Add to that the fact that I don't like the band's name or the guns on the cover, and you have something I've lived happily my whole life without. (TOM)
Shoot The Hostages, Allston Station PO Box 753
Boston, MA 02134

Sinker - Finality, 7" Recorded in 1993, Scott really dug up tapes to get this one out. It really wasn't necessary, but I think that there was a need in some circles so he did it. This was again at the height of when the "emo" scene was fresh and seemed important. I don't think you could get away with these songs in 1998. I could be jaded or I could be right. I still think that the first Sinker single holds up a half decade later. You will still like this one though it has all the pieces: melody, bass lines that don't stop and the speaking/screaming vocals. (EA)
Sunney Sindicut 915 L St. #C-166 Sacramento, CA 95814

Six Going On Seven - Self Made Mess, CD

This took a little while to grow on me but now I actually find it tolerable. Some rockin' tunes that remind me of going to see Sunny Day Real Estate and being kinda wowed at the time. I dig how the singer's voice is quite versatile. He can go from sexygruff (see: Scott McCloud from Girls Against Boys) to oh-so-suaave vibrato stylin' (see: Craig Wedren from Shudder To Think). The music seems to evoke lots of sappy emotional images for me. i.e. relationship shite and other assorted crud. Not a bad release.
Some 405 W. 14th St., No. 3, NY NY, 10014

Sons of Abraham - Termites in His Smile, CD

This is hardcore with metallic licks and screaming vocals. Their heads seem to be in the right place, as the lyrics are personal politics and don't seem to get stupid like many bands of this ilk. For those of you who like good hard metal hardcore of the type that Earache use to serve up, then this band may be for you. (MH)
Exit, PO Box 263, New York NY 10012

Spunk - 7-song, CD For the most part, this is high quality pop punk 'ala Zinks, though a couple of songs on here are boring college rock. Some good rock n' roll licks here too. Too short (18 minutes), but otherwise more decent than not. (MH)
Crack Records, PO Box 29048, Eaton Place,
Winnipeg R3C 4L1 Canada

Star Ghost Dog - Happylove, CD I have always had a soft spot in my heart for melodic indy-pop, with sweet female vocals and so I really liked this CD. The songs are all really catchy and tune-full. Ginny Weaver has a beautiful voice and it's balanced nicely with the rest of the band. A few of the songs are nothing to rush to your local record store for,

but if you dig indy pop, a good majority are really good and defiantly worth a listen. Dig it. (JK)
Catapult 215 A Street 6th floor Boston, MA 02210

The Statics - Sold my Soul, 7" One cut from their newest Rip Off LP and two tracks from the same session this is a scorcher in deed. You gotta like the Statics in "Sold my Soul (to the Rolling Stones)" the LP cut and the flips were probably left best for the single, probably why they aren't on their. The Statics called it quits after a Japanese tour and I am sure that Zach (head man) is already off to a new project. Get it, dope. (EA)
Dead Beat PO Box 283 LA CA 90078

Stick Max - It's Not Big Around, But It's Short, 7" Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey this record is OK. Alright, I pilfered the Heys from the record, so shoot me! It seems that I've become the official emissary for Erie, PA reviews, having just had one last issue. It also seems that the Erie crowd as a deep affinity with cars, as I have way too many covers from there that sport the same. The music on this slab is etched on the color of the month, red. It contains pretty decent, poppy California style punk, with the vocalist pretty much talking out personal lyrics in musical fashion. (TOM)
Eerie Records, 2408 Peach St. Erie, PA 16502

Stick Figure Carousel - S/T, 7" A now defunct band from a place called Michigan has put out this first rate emo filled hardcore. The lyrics are well crafted mystical pieces, whose meanings are clarified with preludes that describe what the song is all about. Even without them though, you can feel the anger, rage, and sadness in each scream of the vocalist. The music itself compliments the depth of the emotions being conveyed. Definitely a keeper. (TOM)
Schema, PO Box 1161 Battle Creek, MI 49016

Supporting Actress - Playing the Part, CD

Like a 90s version of the Minutemen, except without any melodic parts. Supporting Actress are one of the many midwest bands that play music that's very hard to describe—it's very sparse, using mostly single notes instead of chords, and it plods along at a mid-tempo pace. The vocals are a sort of spoken/sung hybrid, and are probably the weakest aspect of the band. Still, this is a good CD and the music is original. (SM)
Playing Field PO. Box 851, Urbana, IL 61803

THE LETTER T

Tantrums - All The Way, 7" A lot more rockabilly style than the Bulge single they did a year or so ago. Two above average cuts that will find their way onto many of mixed tapes. High energy and the spirit of 50s rock n' roll cut through on both of these two short tracks. (EA)
Sharky 1726B N Arlington Pl. Milwaukee, WI 53202

Teen Idols - VML Live, 7" Pretty credible pop punk in the Screeching Weasel vein record one of the best VML Live 7"s I've ever heard, right up there with the Teengenerate one. (But not nearly as good of course...) They cover 99 Red Balloons too, which I think is pretty cool. (GG)
VML

Third Age - Supernatural, CD Melodic HC from the East another outta business band? Well I know for a fact the first, I'm assuming the later. It's eleven songs of wee bit better than ok stuff here, but that's about it. The hidden track at the end is an acoustic number, and probably a joke not worth waiting for. These type of endings leave me to ponder why must bands keep punishing their listeners this way? (TOM)
Atomic Records 2030 West Main Road Middletown, RI 02842

Thundermug - s/t, 7" The cover artwork reminds me of the Dead Beat 7" or something out of The Complete Book Of Devils And Demons. I suspect I was waiting for some brutal, metallic stuff a la Integrity but was stunned upon hearing melodic, poppy punk that sounds similar but definitely pales in comparison to that of Not Rebecca. In time, this band my progress into something I can enjoy but as for now, I'll have to pass on this one. (BR)
Pop A Wheelie! Records, P.O. Box 6337, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561

Titans - Instant Disasters, CD

Oh yeah? These Japanese boys and girl rip. I have heard live tracks from a Repent compilation and wasn't that impressed. This time Lance Rock got the wonderful Mr. Fink of Teengenerate fame and with the Titans put out one scorcher that makes me almost forget about the band called Teengeer.. or something like that. Very high end, low budget and done in the spirit of Rock and or Roll. Very high in energy. Who said that Japanese are uptight? This makes me want to eat sushi, sing Kareokee and learn Karate. Bow down and thank the lord, or Lance Rock for delivering the goods. (EA)
Lance Rock Records 1223 College Drive Nanaimo BC Canada V9r 5Z5

Tokyo Montana - Coldwater, 7" This is not what I expected the back of the cover has a drag riot picture on it, so I am expecting high energy, fast rock and roll. I get a sub-par emo inspired early nineties Hoover thing going on. Huh??? I give an A for tricking me. You know the pattern, slow part, fast, slow, fast, slow. Songs that last too long. Any Hoover fan would love it. This could have been big a few years back. (EA)
Tabloid 29 Rue de l'Etoile 31000 Toulouse France

Tony Feeney / Black Belt Jones - Not

Economically Viable split EP, 7" The first song by Tony Feeney side is a boring and pointless guitar and bass (no drums) drone and the second is a fuzz fest with shitty noisy guitar, rumbly bass, and muddy drums. The second song is a quick little punk-pop ditty that is good, but more or less forgettable. Black Belt Jones delve into poppy punk on both of their tunes, and are at least listenable. This 7" is a big waste of my time. (MH)
Brotherhood of One Records

Traluma - Seven Days Awake, CD I walked in on Traluma's set when they opened for Texas Is The Reason at Fireside. I don't remember much about that day with the exception of being extremely bored and tired. I had a preconceived notion of what this would sound like but I was surprised to find that I really enjoyed the aggressive

style Traluma displays. Unlike the bands I saw them open for, Traluma has an urgent, driving ability that has me listening attentively during the quiet parts, awaiting another impressive explosion of sound. This band has a lot going for them. I just wish I had lyrics. (BR)
Caulfield Records, P.O. Box 84323, Lincoln, NE 68501

THE LETTER U

UFOFU - People to the Air, 7" Yuck, this was a disappointment after listen to Square Target's other release the Rootes Group. Might as well be Weezer or something. This is real safe white boy rock without the soul. They even throw a slow/acoustic style B-side that is uninspired me so much that I must go throw on some James Brown. (EA)
Square Target PO Box 19673 Seattle, WA 98177

The Unholy Three - S/T, 7" This band is a mix between hardcore and crustcore. There was nothing here that excited me too much, but I think that could be changed with a better recording and another year together as a band. I say this because, when these dudes play together for a longer period of time, I could see them making something to write home about. They had a sample at the beginning of the Iron Sheik, doing his number on "USSR and Iran good, USA bad," I'm not sure in what way they meant it cause it ended with "and in the other corner" and they started playing. So if they are in some way American nationalist, you can forget anything that I said which gives them credit as a good band, but if it's just a joke than forget the last part of this review (the only reason I say this is cause America is considered the unholy land 'not only in a religious context, and they are called the unholy three), sorry if I made too many associations. (EF)
Rubber City Records PO BOX 8349 Akron, OH. 44320-0349

THE LETTER W

War Called Peace - Everyday War, LP More overproduced pop punk that ought to be on Epitaph. (NW)
Theologian Records PO Box 1070 Hermosa Beach, CA 90254

Wardead - Intensified Resistance, 7"
European HC in a total 80's style. I would have loved it 10 years ago. Sounds like German stuff like Sons of Sadism or Hostages of Ayatollah. Good. (NW)
Urban Alert BP 21 93340 Le Raincy France

The Weakerthans - Fallow, CD Yes, this is the next hot thang boasting John Samson of Propagandhi fame and fury. But don't be expectin' the overtly angry tunes ala Propagandhi folks. This is sappy pop music, bound to be a hit with the kids. For some reason I had a negative predisposition toward this CD, but I have to admit, it grew on me dammit. I found it a tad odd that they would cover Propagandhi's "Anchorless" but eh well, it's still rockin'. "Letter of Resignation" is purty rad too. Look for the somewhat hidden New Order refer-

ence on this, it's a goody. (PK)
G-7 Welcoming Committee, PO Box 3-905 Corydon Ave., Winnipeg MB, R3M 3S3 Canada

The What-Nots - S/T, CD When I first picked this CD up, I had pretty high expectations on whether I would like it or not. It met about 2/3's of those expectations. I like Eden's voice as well as her lyrical placement. Musically, it didn't give me that all encompassing burst of emotion type feeling that gets me to listen to a record for weeks straight. But that doesn't mean it will not do it for you. Phil's voice on the third song reminds me of Sea and Cake. oh well. I won't say if that's a plus or minus. (EF)
Fiver Records 784 Heathcove Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Wildbunch - The Ballade of MC Sucka DJ, 7" Though I didn't like their track on the Christmas comp that Flying Bomb put out, I do like this single. The Wildbunch is trying hard to sound like nothing else and being that close to Ann Arbor, MI they have the chance. The recording is top notch and is self described as Robot Rock. I would go as far as saying that friends of Beck, or Grand Royal would love this one. The B-side is kinda a rap over heavy rock. There is a Therimen hidden in their as well. Take Devo, Ted Nugent, Man and or Astroman, and a whole bunch of others throw them in a goddamn blender and see if you get anything close to the Wildbunch. (EA)
Flying Bomb PO Box 971038 Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Woggles/Hillbilly Frankenstein - split, 7"
The Woggles play a twangy garage that is a hit among the Estrus fans. "Buzz and Jerk" being the winner on their side though I feel they could take a lesson from the Makers and play a bit faster cause thee rhythm is there, the shake is there, and hell even the Sonics knew when things needed to be sped up. With an adjustable record player you can make this a winner. Hillbilly Frankenstein feature a scorching girl that belts out over another maybe Southern Culture sounded band that may be a little to twangy for most of you. A refreshing change though it hit just right with me tonight. This is music with no message, just good music. (EA)
Solamente 124 St. Marks Place #2 Brooklyn NY 11217

VARIOUS ARTISTS

V/A - The Big sound of Now vol. 3, CD This starts out with Ed Kuepper doing a cover of the AC/DC classic "Highway to hell" and pretty much goes down hill from there. Songs from the Beatifics, Greasy Meal, the Apartments, Screamefeeder, The Skip Heller Generation, and a bunch of other bands I've never heard of. Greasy Meal and a few others get points for trying to be funky, but the majority of this "White college boy and his guitar" compilation is just really really horrible in a Morrissey kind of way. Run. (JK)
TRG records 2217 Nicollet Ave. S MPLS, MN 55404

V/A - The Blue Whale, LP Six band LP from the folks at Bucky Records: Independents, Lizards, Catapult, Submission Hold, Boba Fett Youth and Sharon Tate. Obviously Very Small Records moving to Las Vegas influenced Bucky's choices for

this comp. With the Independents you get sludge rock, the Lizards have the Martian casio punk rock that is way underappreciated (maybe a smarter Dead Milkmen, tough one huh?) and rounding side one is Catapult who are all over the place. Catapult are hard to pin down put Jawbreaker, the Minutemen and a metal band thrown in a blender. Side two gives us Submission Hold, a HC band with female vocals that border emo at times. Boba Fett Youth do the pop thing with the best of em, while Sharon Tate sound like Drive Like Jehu or something like that. A very rounded comp with a lot to absorb, I will either love or hate this in a couple of weeks. (EA)
Bucky Records PO Box 72761 Las Vegas, NV 89170

V/A - Die Die Mia Darlin, 7" Weird comp I couldn't sit through. Lots of different styles from pop punk to death metal to good 80s style HC to East Bay Style punk. Teen Idols (who should respect the punk roots), Lethargic, Cheap Shots, High Strung, etc. All bands from Tennessee. (NW)
Vorgo Pass 819 Watts Circle Nashville, TN 37209

V/A - Five Missiles in Orbit, CD Whoa! A Comp from Spain!!!! Four songs from Shanty Rd, Young Ones, Three Fingers, ODG, and Slang. Mix the newer Lifetime releases with older Fugazi releases, that's what rubbed off my mind with all five bands. All bands presented tight poppy rock out music! I actually liked all bands on this comp. The only problem with the insert is that its in Spanish... The bands sang in English tho... (DV)
B-Core disc PO Box 35221 08080 Barcelona Spain

V/A - Girl Crazy!, LP Seventeen girl infested tracks, all but four of these smokers are exclusive. This is what makes a great comp, top notch bands like The Eyaliners, The Chubbies, Junior Varsity, The Beautys and Ballgagger. All of which I have given good reviews on their singles, it is a shame to leave anyone out. Great artwork done by Sam Leyja and great poster included. The bands range from surf/punk/pop/garage and all are good songs not filler or apparent leftover tracks from an LP. Highly suggested, this is as good as a compilation gets. (EA)
Remedial Records 25701 I-45N #2-186 Spring, TX 77380

V/A - I Gave In Chumpire #100, CD This is one of those comps that are essential in life. Not yours or mine but to the people in a particular scene. This one is Pennsylvania. Those who don't know the Chumpire zine is a one pager done constantly with little tidbits on the scene. You either love it or hate it. This comp is probably along the same lines. I kinda love these things cause they are always a hodge podge of bands. Half of em you will not listen to again. The other half are probably the one and only great song the band wrote. This has a lot of hardcore and emo on it and a few of the songs are instant classics. The Pressgang "Nearer my God to Thee" is such an example a real HC-emo song with the dual male/female vocals that at one point even has handclaps, right on! Thirty one tracks in all, highly suggested. (EA)
\$5 Chumpire PO Box 680 Conneaut Lake, PA 16316-0680

V/A - Invasion of the Insectoids #1, CD

Short compilation of some great Garage/Beat bands. Satelitors, Mondo Topless, The Decibels, The Perverts, The Primate 5, Lightning Beat Man, The Monsters, The Spider Babies, The Neumans, The Silverkings, Beyond Lickin, The Gnats. Leave it to GI Records to have enough sense to not put thirty bands on one comp where only 1.3 of them are any good. Decent comp for someone who is looking for an intro to some harder to find Garage bands. Hail the Primate 5. (EA)
GI Productions PO Box 6948 San Jose CA 95150

V/A Is the human heart so selfish? A

Benefit for Food Not Bombs, CD Yet another Food Not Bombs Comp is released, but this time its from the kids in Atlanta. 16 bands with 16 songs. Bands include Griver, Cerberus Shoal, Quadiliacha, and many more from Atlanta. Music ranged from melodic emoish poppy stuff to more experimental stuff. It comes with a neat little booklet that describes Food Not Bombs, ways to get involved and band info. (DV)
893 PO Box 608 Athens, GA 30603

V/A - Keskideez Volume 1, 7" Crazy comp, the A-side has a rather forgettable Lopo Drido song followed by a violin filled Melmor tune. The B-side has a foreign sounding Rhythm Activism track "Ronald Fuckin McDonald" that is hilarious. The B-side is rounded off by a J-Church song that either has been released before or sounds exactly like a J-Church song I have heard before, yep it is one we know. The schtick here is that its four bands from four countries (USA, France, Puerto Rico, Canada) all singing in their native languages. A successful attempt at doing something a little different. (EA)
Broken Ear PO Box 660397 Sacramento CA 95877-0397

V/A - Kickboxing is Not a Crime, LP 6 bands on this moshcore comp. Enrage start it off with a Crowbar sound (total new school mosh crap). Citizen Pain bust it out phat with triggered drums and Pantera licks. (Yuck) Blood for Blood sound OK, like old Sheer Terror. Face Down play crap mosh stuff with cheese production. Step Aside do decent Sheer Terror style stuff. Tied Down I want to like because of the cool name ripped from a Negative Approach song, but they do the same new school mosh crap. (NW)
Existence of Hate Records La Bonne Recontre 45 7536 Vaulx Belgium

V/A - Munster Juke Box Hits, CD This is a new who's-who on Munster sampler. Kinda essential if you want the lowdown on Munster records in 1997. Few bands that the typical American would know except for maybe: Celibate Rifles, The Gain, Hot Damn, Sit N Spin. Covers all the essentials Garage/Surf/Punk/Rock and Trash. Hey if this sounds your cup o tea? (EA)
Munster APDO 18.107 Madrid 28080

V/A - No More Dick Jokes, CD This CD contains both compilations that have come out of Disgruntled in the past on one convenient, user-friendly compact disc. In a mere sentence, this is hardcore. Not the kind of hardcore that relies on

fashion and other idiocy, but hardcore the way it should be. The standouts; most of which are obvious picks, would be Dillinger Four, Trepan Nation, Killers, Criswell, Pretentious Assholes, Charles Bronson, MK Ultra, Social Coma, Dangermouse, Q Factor, Eucharist and Dr. Lunch. The rest of the CD contains mostly poppy numbers by V.Reverse, Rustweiler, The Elated, Old Man Homo, The Shwankmoes, Los Bastardos, The Dunderheads and Jesus. The price is more than reasonable and the bass player of Dr. Lunch used to let me skate his basement mini-half. Ah, the memories. (BR)
Disgruntled Records, 827 Somonauk Street, Sycamore, IL 60178

V/A - Ourselves, CD 70 minutes of live music is always a task to sit through. It either comes out really bad or really good and unless I'm at a show, I prefer that studio sound that can only be heard on a record. The lineup of bands are solid, although I dislike the majority of the bands here. The Endeavor tracks sound really clean but this band does nothing to move me. Coercion sounds like a bad explosion and had me skipping past immediately. Converge is one of the greatest bands ever but I cannot listen to any of their live recordings. The Fall Silent tracks are the easiest on my ears, being as though the recording is palatable and I enjoy their music quite a bit. Coalesce has this weird affect on me. This live recording is hard on the ears but I still love it. Coalesce is a must see live act. Disembodied and Still I Rise both have quality sound but music I just don't enjoy. For most people, this CD would be a gem but the live recordings just don't inspire me the way they should. (BR)
The Omega, P.O. Box 558, Village Station, NYC 10014

V/A - Punk Rock is Not Only For Your Boyfriend, CD Good comp of songs that for a large part are already released, some long time ago. Quite a few of these bands are male, or mostly male so this isn't an all-girl comp. The songs dealing with women/girls on different levels. The best thing I could do is give you a list of bands and a contact. A great sampler for someone new to the scene. Supergirls, Tilt, Rhythm Collision, Naked Aggression, Discount, Soda, Everyready, etc. (EA)
Disillusioned Records PO Box 18404 Irvine CA 92623

V/A - Punkin'!, CD Spain's best in Punk Rock on this one. Trashy to the max, I loved it, each song seems to open with some kinda silly intro, there is Spanish so I don't know what they are telling me. You get the likes of Los Perros, Pussycats, La Secta, and more (eleven bands in all). Very raw, loud and this one will tear your speakers apart. Punk Rock like I haven't heard in a long time, except in Killed By Death style compilations. (EA)
Munster APDO 18.107 Madrid 28080

V/A - Rejected, CD

This is a lot to digest, thirty four tracks ranging in all the pop/HC/punk spins. Too many to list though a few that you know: Das Klown, Armitage Shanks, J Church, Wat Tyler and more. Really raw recordings, quite a few live in Dublin. This is hard to suggest cause it covers so many things. If you aren't really particular in mixing your genres this is one for you. I just think the whole thing has way too much treble and doesn't do it for me. With all the comps out there this one doesn't rise above the sea of crap. (EA)
Rejected 9 Woodlands Ave. Dun Laoghaire Co. Dublin Ireland

V/A - Santa Cruz Still Sucks, CD

It's one of those comps with a million punk and pop (and ska) bands from one area. It's not bad, actually, and the packaging is cool, but the quality of comps is always decided by the bands on them, so here they are: P.A.W.N.S., Gorehounds, Good Riddance, T.N.T., Soda Pop Fuck You, Political Silence, Fury 66, Slow Gherkin, The Great Divide, Riff Raff, Cheri Lovedog, Reliance, Exploding Crustaceans, Meat Pizza Sandwich, The Muggs, Peach Envy, Buddys Riot, Lost Cause, The Undecided, Junk Sick Dawn, Astron, Thumbs Down, The What-Nots, The Huckstables, Diversion, The Damones and Juke. Whew. This does, however, lose major points for having the Juke song as a 'hidden track'—an annoying and useless concept that should be permanently killed. (SM)
Bad Monkey Records, 473 North Street, Oakland, CA 94609

V/A - Tales from the Livers Edge, 2XLP

David is back with another huge product, with a million bands on it (I count around 43 of em). Once again the topic is booze and once again David doesn't disappoint. Its got everyone that you would expect from a Very Small comp. Lotsa goof, punk, slop and noise. For the \$7-you are guaranteed to find at least one new band that you will want to follow. Great Higgins artwork and funny booklet included. You should already own this, if not send \$7 to the following address. (EA)
Very Small PO Box 85534 Las Vegas, NV 89185

V/A - There is a Light, CD

Some of the highlights are Anomie, Kodiak, Braid, Seraphim and Objection. There are 18 bands total on this CD. If you like the sound that these bands play, then you will definitely enjoy this comp. I guess it is a compilation of bands who dedicated songs to a guy named Zach that passed away less than a year ago, and it came together pretty well. It is a split release between two labels; red jagwire and grimmlake, but since James from red jagwire sent it in, here is his address. (EF)
Red Jagwire PO BOX 8317 Austin TX.78713

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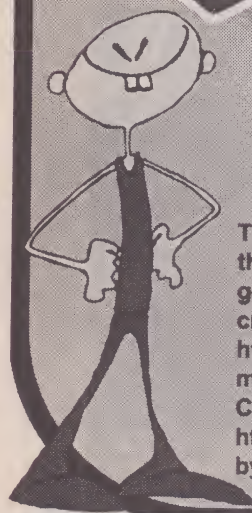
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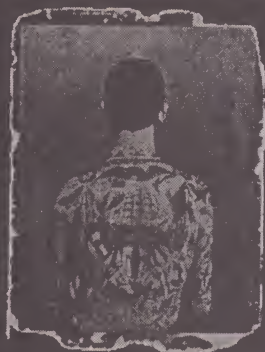


The entire Pain catalog is now available through DNA/Valley Distribution. You can get tour dates, more merchandlse and craziness from Pain on the internet at <http://www.indieweb.com/pain> or by mailing the band at pose@dbtech.net. Contact Birdcage Records at <http://www.greenheart.com/birdcage/> or by email at birdcage@greenheart.com



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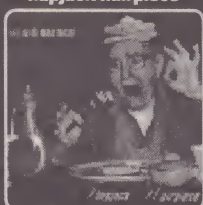
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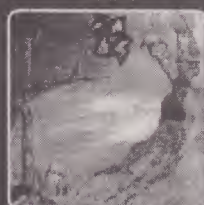
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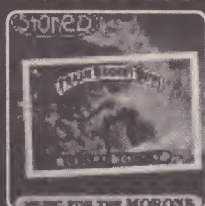
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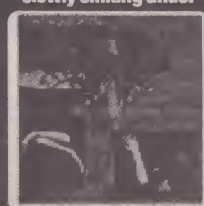
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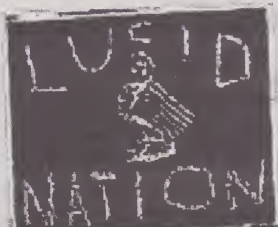
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GIRLS GIRLS G



In the past few months I have seen some amazing girl films from all over, so here's a rundown of some estrogen-fueled cinema:

HOW THE MIRACLE OF MASTURBATION SAVED ME FROM BECOMING A TEENAGE SPACE ALIEN I got this in the mail from a girl named Dulcie Clarkson. I don't know too much about her, but this is the first film I've been sent unsolicited that is really good. *Miracle* is about a young girl, Dakota (played with total charm and innocence by Rosaruby Kagan) who lives on a commune. Before you think 'Oh no, not a bunch of hippies!' don't worry. The film is an honest, sexy look at a young girl figuring out her sexuality.

Dakota is becoming too old to hang out with the commune kids. When they all go swimming, everyone's naked except for her. The younger kids taunt "Teenager! Teenager!" Usually they can all hang out easily, but one night as she cuddles with the cute younger hippie boy, Jonah, he fingers her for the first time and it opens her eyes to a whole new part of herself. The next day she goes to town with her mom and checks out the local punks who sit on the sidewalk and spare change. Eventually one blue haired mohawkan, David, comes over and asks her about the Ramones, tries to impress her and after her blank reactions he tells her she's an alien. She takes it to heart and starts reading science fiction, hoping that the aliens will come down and take her home. She decides to go to public school to learn to be normal, telling everyone her name is Diana, but the kids can tell she's a freak and they tease her. Then one

day while waiting for the aliens out in the woods at night, she starts to masturbate for the first time, remembering how Jonah fingered her. After that, she learns to accept herself.

Shot on video, at first I thought Dakota was the filmmaker, it was so personal and honest. The film is only 22 minutes and it's pretty simple but it's really, really good. The music is great, lots of interesting camerawork, and the acting is so natural you forget it's not real. And it made me really happy that girls out there are doing such powerful stuff with their video cameras. What's stopping you?

BIG MISS MOVIOLA A veritable force on the filmpunk scene, Big Miss Moviola (aka Miranda July) is blazing a trail for the rest of us. I first met her at the Olympia Film Festival last year where she presented some cool girl shorts. She also did this cool-as-fuck experiment where she had a camera set up in a closet where people could go in and had one minute to say a sentence starting with "No one ever told me..." To everyone's surprise, she showed it at the end of the night. It was totally intimate and fascinating!

She is also putting together the *Umatic Chain Letter* where girls from all over could send her their short and \$5 and get a groovy compilation. I gave her my trailer for *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore* and received an amazing mix of films in return. On the tape I got, there's films from Maryland, San Francisco, Florida, Seattle, Atlanta, New Mexico and France.

One of my favorites is Sarah Kennedy's *Dirty Fingernails*, about how she likes to put together motorcycles and the frustration with not only condescending attitudes by men but

with her own limitations in grasping some of the more complex technical aspects. Kennedy uses stop motion, post-sync sound, great music editing and a rad sense of humor. It's so satisfying to watch as she finds a bike and bike parts and then puts it all together. There's a great mechanical dream sequence. Also good is Sarah in a white dress running in slow motion towards a foxy motorcycle.

I also liked *The Running of the Daschunds* by Shayna Nickel, an absurd documentary on a group who converge in the park in NY to get their daschund dogs together to play.

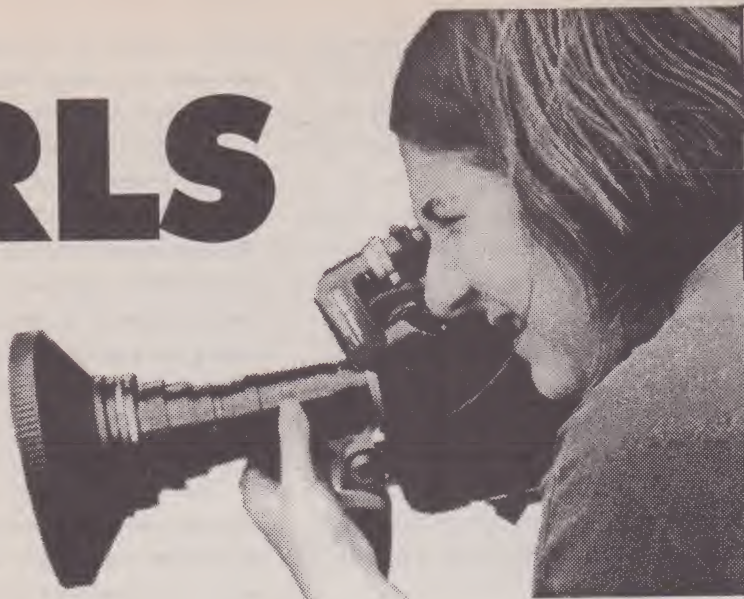
Objection by Gina Bihum was an interesting series of clips of the girls from Disney cartoon movies juxtaposed with tons of snippets of girl-powered songs using subversive humor to expose our fairy-tale expectations.

Dulcie Clarkson has an earlier film, *A Wild Horse Rider*, which is an interesting mediation on the death of her wild man, racist, sexist, homophobic father. It was interesting to see her work before *Miracle*.

There was also a trailer for the goofy skate/grrrl classic, *The Yo Yo Gang* by G.B. Jones, of Fifth Column fame.

Recently, I ran into Big Miss Moviola in Portland when I was a roadie for Sam Green as he was touring his film, *The Rainbow Man* around the Northwest. She told me she's setting up an alternative distribution for films by girls, including *Miracle* through mail order and record companies. She also just did a national college tour of her work. Except for San Francisco punk film veteran Greta Snider and Baltimore collage film queen Martha Colburn, I don't know any other gals who have hit the road on a cinematic

GIRLS



UNDERGROUND

mission—I'm inspired! For more info send to mjuly@europa.com or Miranda July, P.O. Box 14284, Portland, OR, 97293

THE FIRST TIME (*Das Erste Mal*) I know it's annoying to review movies that have very little chance of getting seen, but I can't help it 'cuz through some miracle, maybe one of these films just might play somewhere near you and you could have a chance to see something really different and great. That's how I feel about this incredible film from Germany. It was made for German TV but is hitting a couple of U.S. festivals this year. I saw it at this German film series in San Francisco and got to hear the energetic director, Connie Walther, speak afterwards.

The First Time is about 15-year-old Fili who is obsessed with Johnny Depp. She has fantasy conversations with him in her head and one day she figures out that if they're ever going to get together and fuck, she's going to need to get some experience. So she goes out in search of a boy who will deflower her. She blows off her 'good' girl friends and starts hanging out with the school's wild girl who takes her out to clubs and gives her advice.

The film takes some interesting turns and it's so weird to see a film that shows 15 year old girls having sex. It's not like Fili has sex once, thinks she's pregnant and finds a nice non-threatening dude like Brenda did on *BH 90210*. Fili loses it and then gets to have sex with the boy she REALLY likes. Those wacky Germans! I love how all the actresses look like real girls and how the guys are totally adorable. (I think that's how you can tell a

woman directed a film—they cast the kind of guys they'd like to fuck). Fili has some meat on her and even her chubby best friend gets some action. There's so much that's in this film that rings really true to me. Hopefully there will be more opportunities to see this classic coming of age film.

WHATEVER This is my favorite film of the year. Like *The First Time*, it's a coming of age film that is definitely not whitewashed or phony at all. Despite the '90s title, it's the early '80s and Anna is in her last year of high school. She's a good painter and with the help of her high school art teacher (Frederic Forrest) she's hoping to get into Cooper Union Art School, where if you get in, the tuition is paid for. The main plot of the movie is how she has to figure things out on her own. Her wild child best friend is too fucked up from her abusive home life, her mom is too busy with work and with dating a married man, the boys in her life are too shallow and weak, especially her first love, an older boy painter who always seems to be returning from some exciting bohemian adventure, but is so insecure he has to tell her what she should do. The only thing Anna really has is her dream of becoming a painter. She's so real looking, played perfectly by Liza Weil who can convey exactly what's she thinking with just a look. When she says, "I'm afraid of being ordinary," your heart aches with longing.

There are so many girl rites of passage here that don't get explored, not just the usual stuff like doing drugs and losing your

by Sarah Jacobson

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virginity, but the chaos that ensues when you go on your own adventures; going to New York and being so impressed by everything; testing your attractiveness power by picking up older men; gagging on your first blow job; running away just to see if something will happen; and the weird pressure that comes up in a friendship if one girl's big dreams outweigh her best friend's day to day dramas.

All this set to a great soundtrack of the Ramones, Iggy Pop, Blondie, Patti Smith, the Jam and Rush (for the scuzzy party scene, of course). I never thought I'd see the day where I'd be able to relive my high school years through a movie. Fuck yeah! (This film will be in theaters, hopefully in July, so go see it!)

SOME NUDITY REQUIRED This is a documentary made by Odette Springer who did music for at least 50 Roger Corman films. Part of her was totally creeped out by working on so many stupid, misogynist films and she used *Some Nudity Required* to explore the relationships between these films, how they portray women and women's relationship to them. This is no boring Feminist 101 study, it's funny as hell and has great interviews with some of the biggest movers and shakers of the B movie schlock genre like Roger Corman, legendary producer Samuel Arkoff, Arlene and Andy Sidaris (Andy starts to direct Odette on how she should film him), Jim Wynorski (Jim starts to direct Odette on how she should film him too), on-her-way-up B movie actress Maria Ford, Penthouse pet and merchandising queen Julie Strain and many others.

From the guy directors you get the usually 'quirky stories' of making quickie low budget films including Jim Wynorski's brilliant observation, "Breasts are the cheapest special effects there is!" but what was incredibly fascinating is to hear the women's side of things.

Director Catherine Cyran talks honestly about her need to make films just as sexy as the guys so as not to get laughed out of the business; Maria Ford reveals how much it does bother her that her sexuality is played up and her acting is always cut; and Julie Strain is totally honest about her intentions to exploit the business for her own purposes—there's an especially hysterical Julie Strain surprise at the end of the movie!

Springer is very close to the film and it becomes a venue of working out her sexual hang ups. She admits to being turned on by some of the scenes, even the weird super-vio-

lent ones. Mid-movie she remembers how she was molested as a child, which is heavy, but also incredibly hard hitting.

It's not just the women who are critical of the genre, however, Chuck Moore tells about how he turned down the last five exploitation films because he's fed up with the role models of men in the films: rapist, sex freak or killer. At one point in one of the interviews when Springer is asking Jim Wynorski about feminist issues, he says, "I hate this interview. This is boring!" And he walks out! (Word is he loves SNR and his portrayal as a total hardass—softie!)

The film is really comprehensive and interesting and Springer manages to balance serious issues with a playful outlook. As much as she's horrified by the films, you can also tell she has a soft spot in her heart for the business and the people. As someone whose first film was called *I Was a Teenage Serial Killer*, I can honestly say her observations on the connections between B movies and girls was right on!

The reason I started making films in the first place was because I never saw real girls in movies. Last year there seemed to be a bunch of 'girl films' that I didn't relate to at all and I was pretty bummed that just because women have started to enter into filmmaking, it didn't mean that there were going to be more films I wanted to see. So when I saw all this stuff in the last few months, it feels like things *are* getting better. I don't mind the lame movies as much now that I have more films to choose from. Hopefully more stuff like this will get good support and distribution so the audiences can choose for themselves.

...

And speaking of distribution, me and my mom are starting to self-distribute my film *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore* so if you'd like the film to come to your town theater, college or museum, contact my mom at REJMMom@aol.com or Ruth Jacobson, P.O. Box 471807, San Francisco, CA 94147. We're booked in Austin at the Dobie Theater from March 22nd to April 2nd right after the South by Southwest Film/Music festival. If you're going to be there for either one, look for me 'cuz I'll be there the whole time handing out our "Not a Virgin" stickers. And please help spread the word so we can kick ass and get bookings at other towns! Thanks in advance and see ya soon! ☺



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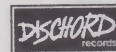
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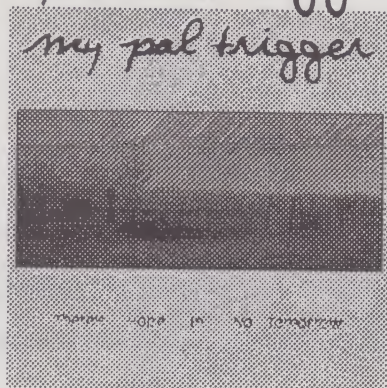
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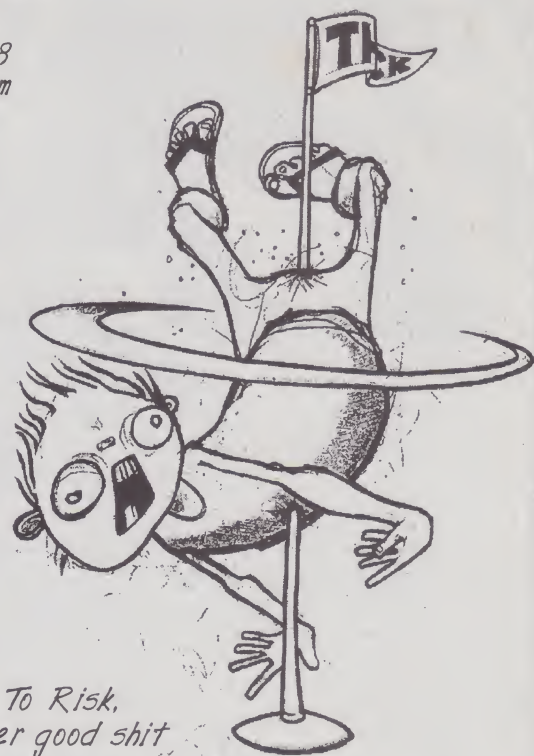
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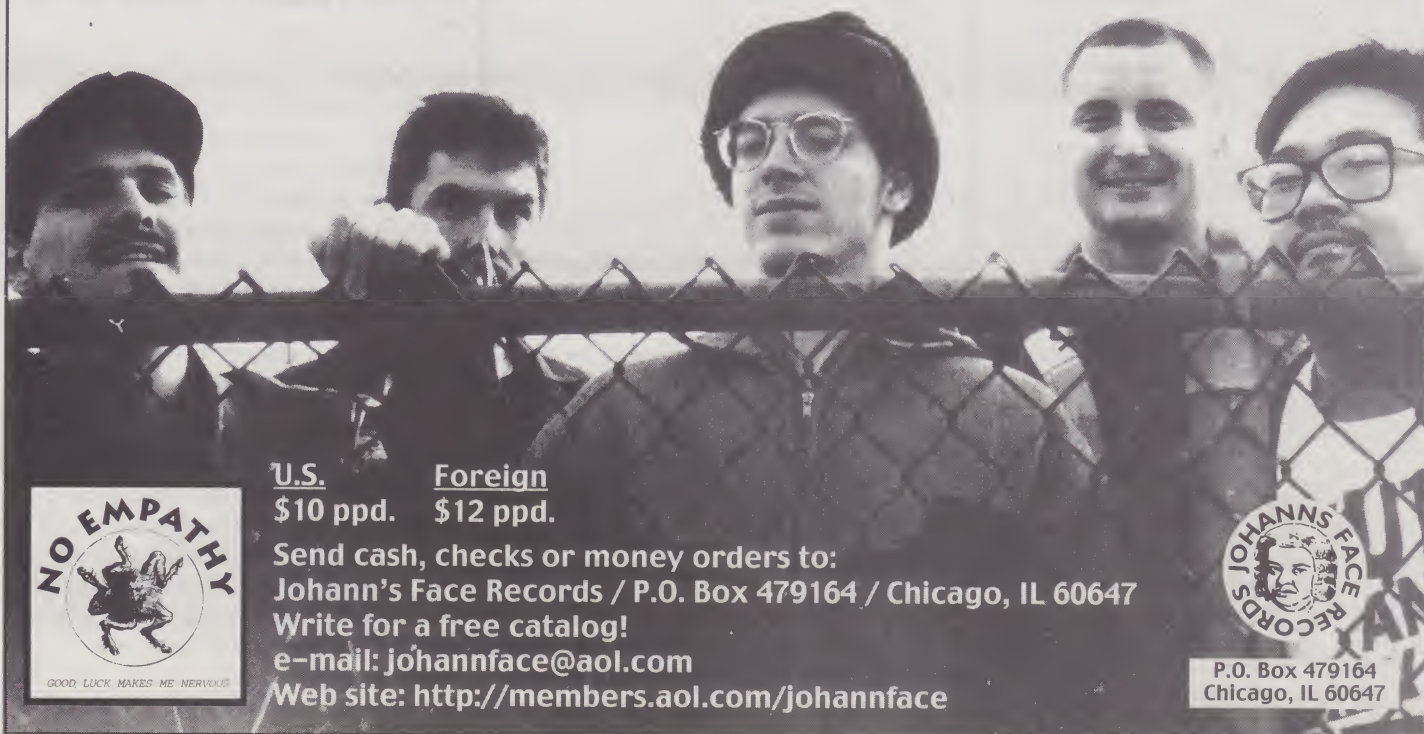
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Zines zines zines
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zines zines zines.

Just 'cause a
reviewer doesn't like
'em doesn't mean
they're not good.

This issue's
reviewers:

Brian Ryder (BR), Eric
Action (EA), Faiz Razi
(FR), Josh Kermiet
(JK), Jason Schuers
(JS), Jack Saturn (JS),
Patti Kim (PK), Scott
MacDonald (SM).

Access Denied #3

Here lies beauty, from a design standpoint. In many ways like a busier version of Scenery, the full-sized pages herein ask for attention more for their detail and layers of cut-up comic strips, old pictures and pencil drawings than for their words. This lack of words is a bit disappointing, despite the more-than-ample collages. Most of the writing is vague poetic fiction, but an article on consumer culture based around "The Price Is Right" television show is not only adeptly written, but also quite true. A zine with a creative spark apparent and enough for the eyes to dissolve, but not enough words to stir the mind. (JVS)

3250 O'Neil, Apt. #22, Boulder, CO 80303

Alice Is An Island #2

Good read! Chock full o' interesting stuff on Rohypnol, Alger Hiss, Rape, Education and Motley Crue. I'm really going to enjoy having this zine around while I'm taking all my Women's studies courses this semester. Can't wait to see the next issue. Good work Robyn! (FR)

\$1 and 2 stamps c/o Robyn
Marasco Smith College Box
8438 98 Green St. North
Hampton, MA 01063-0100

Alternative Prom Queen #4

A small personal zine with poems and writings. The main story was hard to follow because, for some reason, the writer doesn't use punctuation. It's about a girl he started a relationship with and left, and it isn't very flattering to him. I got very little out of this zine. (SM)

33 E. Walnut St., Westerville, OH 43081 \$1

Angry Thoreauan #20

The bordering classic AT is still coming and this time its not as gross as it usual is. Highlights include a nice article on the meter maids of Los Angeles that nay motorists of a major city would appreciate reading. MoniQue's 900 lines and her DIY, honest approach is intriguing. The writing is top notch and the music/book reviews are above tolerable (unlike this review right here). You should already have been reading this for at least a few of their ten years anyway. (EA)

PO Box 3478 Hollywood CA 90078

Antithisestablishmentarianism #3

Fucking stupid name. I don't see how Greg expects any mercy after making zine reviewers type out that garbage. Fortunately, the writing in the zine is wonderful. The so-true phrase "the personal is the political" immediately comes to mind while reading Greg's words. Thoughts on the police, volunteering at a homeless shelter, being a virgin (a truly heart-warming piece of writing if I ever saw one), a More Than Music Festival road trip diary, and many other pieces of writing that tells us more about the writer than the events that took place. Interviews with a stand-offish Jen Angel and the reformed band Nema. Too bad about the shock value approach Greg took with his anti-abortion article using the old "dead babies in the garbage can" trick to skew our emotions on the non-debatable issue of freedom of choice (and when everyone knows darn well that the overwhelming majority of abortions do not take place in the second or third trimesters). Together we are just two more men spouting off about a womyn's choice. (JS)

\$2; Greg, Box 21811, Roanoke, VA, 24018

Beckett Tapes #1

A crazy story about a crazy lady, quarter-bin comics reviews, highway games which sound a little dangerous to me, "The Tapping Game" which made me chuckle, Digital Man, a fun "interview" with Teengenerate, record reviews, and thoughts on sweatpants. This zine is a nutty m'lange of sorts. Kinda geeky, kinda funny, kinda up my alley. Not a bad debut at all. (PK)

\$1 or 3 stamps or trade; Beckett, 1250 Belle, Lakewood OH, 44107

Blow Up Baltimore #1

Here's kind of a neat premise for a zine you don't see every day. It's a tribute of sorts to, you guessed it, Baltimore Maryland! (duh!) Even though I'm not terribly familiar with the city in question here, editor J. K. makes this totally palatable to any literate being. Interviews with Candy Machine, Severna Park, and Chris X of Reptilian Records. Plus some funny comics, a rad piece by an ex-McDick's employee, and how it sucks to be a queergirl in said city. A purty cool first issue. (PK)

\$1; J. K./Blow Up Baltimore, 69 Cooper Sq. #1137, NY NY, 10003

Brainchild #1

Tasteful and uncontrived, Brainchild is what a high school literary magazine would be if it was done with a copy machine and some actual soul. This first issue is quite old, but due to the content, is not dated. The prose and short fiction within, coupled with photographs, sets a high-brow tone, but even

the pieces which are essentially "poetry" don't seem elitist or boring. The best pieces are the journal-esque entries by the editor, including pieces written about the death of a friend and his love affair with road trips. (JVS)

\$1; Charlie, 784 Ponce de Leon Place, Apt. #104, Atlanta, GA 30306

Brainchild #2

This second issue breaks from the mold of the initial publication due to the inclusion of many more diary and personal entries, many written during Charlie's time spent in Wisconsin. These thoughtful pieces are actually the crowning glory of the zine, although the other included pieces compliment the whole rather well. A larger volume than the first issue, this edition includes two longer fiction pieces by the editor. Both issues are bound in a very distinctive style, which will please the aesthetically-inclined reader. (JVS)

\$1; (see Brainchild #1 review)



Breathing Iced Tea Mix #3

This is the "mass transit issue"—three stories involving public transportation. One is about young love getting lost on an interstate train; another is about a creepy guy in a train station who offers the kid a computer modem; and another is kind of a tour of Philadelphia. The stories are put together well and capture your attention, and I definitely like the theme of the zine. Well done and recommended. (SM)

Sean, 8420 Bridle Rd., Philadelphia, PA 19111 \$1

Brushback #6

Dave, the guy that does Brushback, is a funny motherfucker. Bear with me. This boy writes about all this shit I could care less about, like minor league baseball and CT bands and stuff like that. But I read the damn thing cover to cover 'cause he's soooo funny. "He's soooo dreamy." Sigh. My eyes are burning out of my head, see, but I read every single solitary word, see... I think the glow off the glossy paper is driving me insane. Comes with a semi-boring 7" record by Grand Passion. Bonus, I guess. (JS)

\$2.95; 139 Sunnyside Ave., Waterbury, CT, 06708-3435

Butterfly Culture #1

Lovely little booklet that revolves around the theme of butterflies and their metaphorical relation to the cycle of human life. Done by two dear friends, Bryan and Suzannah, I like how the different writings are androgynous enough that either writer (or both?) could be responsible. At times, this lovely piece of work gets so personal that maybe only the writers themselves can understand or relate to the words. But that in itself is pretty damn endearing. Read it in bed on a lazy Sunday afternoon. (JS)

\$2; 10 Kaw Ave., Rockaway, NJ, 07866 or Box 377, Kennebunkport, Maine, 04046

Charlie's Angles Forever #1

Hmmmm. Don't really know what to say. Charlie's Angles forever reads like a pop culture dissertation for some college class. There are five of these covering all the episodes, related stories in the Angel's lives. You get the co-stars of every issue the plot and the undercover roles each played. I think I would have liked this if the show was still on. I don't know if you have any interest in CA's then this is for you, it is as big as it gets. They are thick and pricey (think about all the research at \$7 each or \$30 for all five). (EA)

Debravation Station 4452 Winifred Wayne MI 48184

Chimps #3

Layla is right and that this is a real convoluted read. Though don't fret, that is half of Chimps charm. This is the third and my third reading of Chimps and I wouldn't say it getting better cause I loved em all. Less skating in this one, a lot of interviews and maybe even less of the ramblings that are Chimps. Interviews with Month of Birthdays, Promise Ring, Red Monkey (am I unhip to only know one of these bands??). There is a lot more and a fan of almost any genre of P-rock would enjoy this for some reason whether it be: riot girl, simple machine fan, skater (boy or girl), sXe. Highly suggested. (EA)

\$3 US, 1 pound about 46 pages. Layla PO Box 2804 Brighton bn 22AU UK

College Boy

This is a wallet-sized, foldout zine done by one Chris Terry. It's kinda like a lil supplementary to his regular thang—Gullible zine. Some funny stories written at, and influenced by, college! Big surprise there. Something about the crudity of the drawing and the sincerity in Chris's writing is enough to make you smile. But why does this zine smell like it's been doused in cologne? Hmmmm. (PK)

2 stamp for 2 copies; Chris Terry, PO Box 4909, Richmond VA, 23220

Cooties #6

Great travel diaries of Kate Cooties that take us throughout the Eastern half of the US. Good interesting stories that will make you want to quite your job and do some traveling as well. The cover boasts smut, travel, activism and general fiascos. I like these travel/personal zines. The smut is personal and not that smutty at all. One way to ruin some nice romantic smut is to follow it with a rape story and a rape discussion amongst some friends. It made it go from happy, innocent fun to horrible truth about relationships. Nice Elvis theme throughout and the hopes of a Memphis trip. Excellent, nice layout and writing. (EA)

\$2 2504 Ravencroft CT. Virginia Beach, VA 23454

Core Kill Zine #4

Local show reviews and scene information, some pretty Twisted comics, zine reviews, a lengthy article on the VOCA corporation, a funky photo of John Porcellino—the genius behind King Cat Comics, short fiction, an interview with the band The Salvador Deli, music reviews, cult film reviews (go Prince go!), and Bryar's Beef. So many different things incorporated into this baby in true slap-it-togetha punkrock fashion. (PK)

\$1; Tom Watson, 3240 N. Marshall Rd. #1, Kettering OH, 45429

Delirium #2

I don't understand a zine that discusses women being treated as objects as being bad (it is, don't get me wrong) but then spends a page or so singing the praises of pin-up girls as a legitimate art form. Make up yr. Mind. (FR)

Trade or a few stamps, Harmony Welch 4809 Del Monte Rd. La Canada, CA 91011

Dogprint #10

Lenny's zine has been progressing over the years, and now is just a monster. Like most zines of its size, it is mostly comprised of the standards: columns, zine/music reviews and ads. Lenny asks probing questions in his well-chosen interviews with Braid, (the) Locust, the VSS, Charles Bronson, and Matt Anderson of Gravity Records, but unfortunately, the old failure to properly proofread and correct grammar pops up again in this issue. Dogprint passes on newsprint, in favor of nice heavy paper, and this fact saves the reader's fingers an ink bath. The zine comes with a split 7" from two Ohio bands, Inept and Feci del Signore. (JVS)

\$4 US, \$6 world; Lenny, P.O. Box 84, Suffern, NY 10901

Essential Media Winter 1997/1998

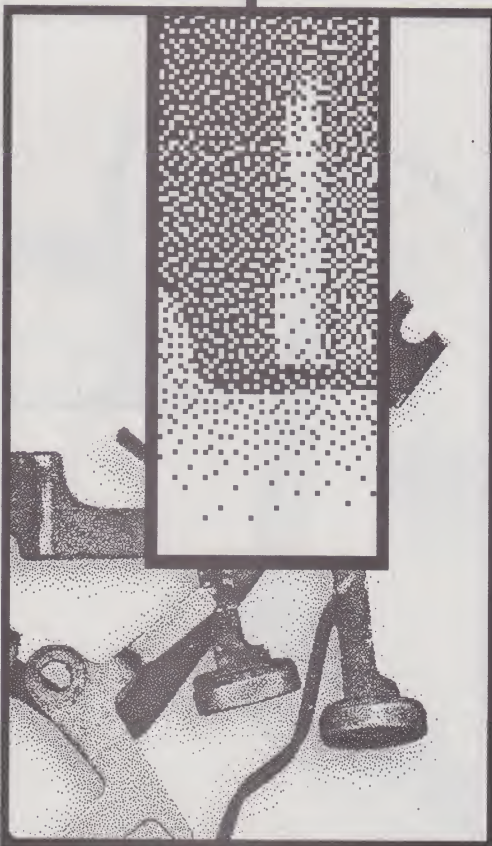
This is just a giant catalog of alternative print, video and sound. A real nice catalog with great prices. Normally I would toss these and not let it get in the zine reviews section, but this is a keeper. I don't know anything about their speed and quality. The price is right though. (EA)

PO Box 661245 LA, CA 90066

Fight For Your Mind #1

This looks so good, but it's in French. Once again, the public education system has failed me because I can't read a word of it. Interviews with Das Klow, Fleas and Lice, Boycott and articles about Leonard Peltier, Kroniks and a tribute to Operation Ivy. Four bucks is a bit steep, especially if you can't read French, but the quality is certainly here. (JS)

\$4; Florimond Soyez, 47 Avenue Gilbert Roux, 03300 Cusset, France



Free Choice #2

Austria's underground should applaud Free Choice. These kids care enough about their scene to document all of the good bands, zines and shows happening in their area. As well, they try to tap into the popular SoCal scene by interviewing and reviewing bands like Rhythm Collision and The Nobodys. With a little more hardcore coverage, less music, and more politics/social articles, Free Choice could be one of Europe's scene staples. (JS)

\$2; Marcus Wiedner, Stollenweg 7, 8700 Leoben, Austria

Green Means Go #5

Upon glancing at the cover, I had to wonder if I could relate to any of what was inside of this zine. I hadn't heard any of the bands featured (those being Kingface, The Dismemberment Plan and Emory Swank) and it appeared strictly music oriented. I soon found this to be an accurate guess but what makes this zine interesting is the fact that it contains personality and really gets into the content, rather than providing dry facts that are only so useful. The reviews of zines and records are long and informing while maintaining a strong critical base. The foundation seems to be planted in more of an indie rock scenario but there are hints of interest in the punk scene. From cover to cover, the writings in this publication are worth the time spent reading and I see this zine having a bright future ahead. (BR)

\$2; P.O. Box 3306, Jersey City, NJ 07303

Happy Happy, Kill Kill #?

Okay, any zine that can interview both Pavement and Avail in the same issue is pretty awesome. The Avail interview is priceless alone for those sexy suave glamourboy shots of the band! Hoo! There's also a piece on riding the rails, humorous journal entries from when the ed was in India, chatting with Sheperd Fairey of the Andre the Giant Has A Posse phenom, and zine/music reviews. Don't be thrown off by the questionable cardstock cover—the contents of this zine make up for it. (PK)

\$2; PO Box 231205, Encinitas CA, 92023-1205

The Happy Book

I was pleasantly surprised when I got this little spray painted cardboard covered zine bound with a little rubberband. This is definitely not yr. Average zine idea either. It's basically the product of this guy klaus' creative process while his band was on tour (not sure what band, but bonus points for not shamelessly promoting himself) and he got people to write in his notebook things that make them happy. Fun idea with plenty of blank pages to add yr. Own happy thoughts. A good positive read that will go on my coffee table once I can afford a coffee table. (FR)

\$1 klaus 62 Creekwood Square Cincinnati, OH 45246

Happy Goat #4

It is painfully obvious from beginning that the people behind this project are still bound by the shackles of their high school years. The writings do nothing to hide these facts in any way. Some of the writing is decent, some of it is funny to read about but one particular article caught me off guard. Entitled "Irish-German-Swedish-Scottish American", Dumbo goes on to say that people of Mexican, African, Japanese descent should stop whining and be American and not a part of their respective culture. He

also says that if they don't like the racism here in America that they should "get the fuck out!". Am I wrong but doesn't that sound racist in and of itself?! The editor immediately goes on with a disclaimer for what his friend Dumbo had just written but I think that even though he feels censorship is wrong, he should have taken into consideration that such a controversial opinion could sour the review his zine has just received. Such an opinion runs rampant throughout white America and unfortunately, it exists here in the punk scene as well. (BR)

\$1; 1706 NW 10th St, Ankeny, IA 50021

Ignition #4

A cut and paste music zine from punks in Singapore. It's got essays, interviews with Rhythm Collision, Tobi Vail (reprinted), the Core Club, record and zine reviews and a lot of talk about Christianity. Not a bad zine. (SM)

Michael, 178 Bukit Batok West Ave., 8 #07-225, S(650178) Singapore \$2 (US)

Insert Zine Name Here #5

Yawn. Thoroughly unimpressive MRR wannabe with columns, reviews, interviews, and some poetry. Nick Fitt is a contributor. Ya right, like that's a selling point. You might enjoy this if you're bored or in the mood for something painfully familiar. Otherwise, stay away! (JS)

\$2; 137 Black Brook Rd., S.Easton, MA, 02375

Intox #2

Intox mostly focuses on the Fat, Epitaph corner of the punk spectrum, along with interviews with a few local Colorado bands, and some album reviews. The whole thing is put out by one 17 year old girl, which is a pretty ambitious task, and something I wish I could have the patience to do myself. The layout is nice, and it is printed on real newsprint with an attractive comic cover. The writing could use some work. I can't really recommend this yet, but I think it really has promise— get some more people to help write and keep it up. (JK)

Intox PO box 4173 Estes Park, CO 80517

Karate Time #5

If God really did exist, surely he would put an end to all of these excruciatingly shoddy Christian 'zines... Quotes from the Bible, Tooth & Nail in the thank you list, some talk about Christmas and how "Jesus is the reason for the season"... Pardon me while I barf all over the crappy God poetry. (JS)

\$1; Adam Kieffer, 457 Gould St. Room 111, Winona, MN, 55987-2441

Kill The Machine

A strange looking ragged booklet devoted to exposing people to the evils of television. A great idea is pretty much ruined by terrible binding and copying. Every page

is a different size and every margin is radically different, so you have to literally take the zine apart to read it. Some great articles on TV's ill effects on our lives.

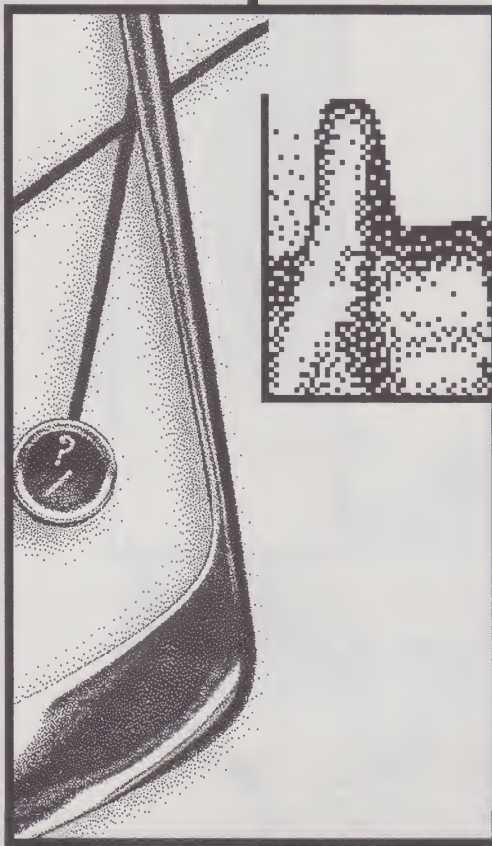
Too bad it's virtually unreadable. Melissa, I think a reprint is in order... (JS)

\$1; 2612 Kings Rd., Moore, OK, 73160

Knuckle Sandwich #4

A quarterly collection of comics out of Rochester, NY. As with most comic anthologies, I found some submissions to be a lot better than others. Some pieces were of the goofy comics variety while others took more of a graphic novel approach. Of special mention was the centerfold piece picturing the showdown between a sheriff and deputy which was beautifully drawn with white chalk on a dark background. Some of the goofier comics were expendable, to say the least, although Paul Bennek's stuff has a tight grasp on the art of satire and slapstick. (JS)

\$1; Anthony Decanini, 20 Alfie Dr., Rochester, NY, 14623, aed4864@rit.edu



Lockdown #1

The editor begins her first issue with a lengthy tale of a visit to Seattle, which is mostly composed of her friends getting incredibly drunk and reads like a long run-on sentence-filled note to one of these friends. The zine doesn't recover after that, with dismissal show reviews filling up a good portion of the 48 pages. A sincere account of the editor's desire to quit smoking is the most affecting item included, but unfortunately, even it lacks insight. The remainder of the pages are consumed with road trip stories, record reviews, feminist/anti-sexist rants, and various clippings. The zine's primary focus is on her hometown of Spokane, most openly evidenced by the zine's address only being added as an afterthought. Something to be disseminated amongst friends, but not much more. (JVS)

\$1; P.O. Box 1781, Spokane, WA 99210

Machorka

This is a sloppy cut-and-paste zine from Italy which consists of 22 pages of reprinted leaflets from the likes of Earth First!, the Animal Liberation Front, Class War U.K., as well as many prisoners' rights issues. Plenty of band/organization addresses are listed within, as well as a Croatia Scene Report and some band interviews. Many items suffer from loss of clarity due to being translated into English. (JVS)

\$1.50/trade/free to prisoners; Battaglia Gianni, Piazza Assietta N9, 10050 Sauze D'Oulx, Torino (ITALY)

Mad Monks Magazines #12

Nice half page format with an incredible friendly layout and superb printing job that makes Mad Monks seem important. Lotsa interviews with pop-punk bands (NUFAN, Pulley, Swingin' Utters, etc.), lotsa reviews and the typical zine stuff. Best props go to the Suicide Machines interview for making them seem as stupid as they are and the interview with Icki from Sty magazine. The Europeans have had some nice zines as of late. I suggest you pick it up just to see what the other side of the world thinks of this half. My suggestion is to write about European stuff, that is where it is at anyway. (EA)

\$2, 40 Partridge Road, Roath, Cardiff, CF2 3QX, Wales, UK

Mind Toilet Magazine #78

Here's a superfun ska-punk rag that will tickle your toes even if the very term "ska-punk" sends you off running like a funky chicken with scabies. Interviews with Isaac Green and the Skolars, The Articles, The Adjusters, Metro Stylee, and the Go-Go Rays. Music/zine/show/bathroom (!) reviews. Plus some tres rad column-writing with a lot of talk about S-E-X (which we are all gluttons for, no?). Let's talk about sex BA-BEE! Let's talk about YOU and ME!... (PK)

\$12/year subscription; PO Box 6132, L.I.C. NY, 11106-2866

Moo! Magazine #3

I really had fun with the fiction in this one, wish there was more. The reviews of shows and other stuff seemed pretty superfluous, and I coulda done without em. Plus, the comix review section really doesn't make me interested in the comix if you try to describe what the panels look like. More fiction! Less Schlock! (FR)

2 stamps Moo! Magazine 1085 Comm. Ave. #313 Boston, MA 02215

Multiball #13

Wow! This is the cherry on the sundae this month. Multiball, in efforts to lose more money has gone _ page, with nice printing to boot. A great Tim Warren interview and music reviews that review the kind of music I like. Obviously from the title this is a punk rock zine with a pinball twist, ala Estrus/garage

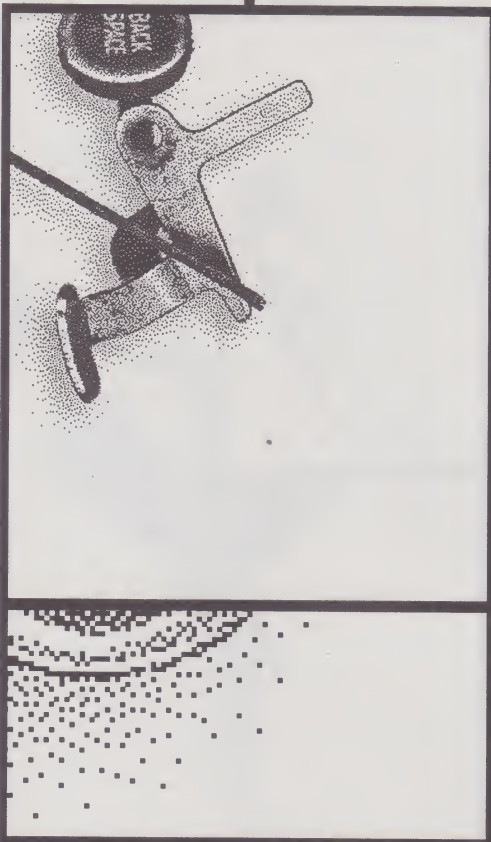
scene. The short articles ringing the best here. My favorite being the story on soda pop and the authors dislike in its trend over the last years. I still have a bottle (glass that is) of both Coke and a Mt. Dew waiting for me on a special occasion. Anyway, pick up this trash and write em a letter cause the fans of Multiball should speak up before the boys quit making it (like the glass bottle), you will miss it when it is gone a whole lot more than we appreciate it while it is here. (EA)

\$2.50 PO Box 40005, PDX, OR 97240

The Multiplier #3

Formerly known as Biker Pride, this tall and skinny publication is aimed at bike messengers. Unfortunately for the casual reader, this means that a number of the articles are effectively obscured through their intense use of biker slang. The more easily readable passages within are sincere, however (such as numerous mentions of the editor's recovery from head trauma induced by a biking accident). Much of the writing addresses the ills of car culture and other bike-related political topics, and the zine's inspiration is fueled by an underlying contempt for "the suits" that bike messengers serve. (JVS)

\$3; P.O. Box 2275, Minneapolis, MN 55402



My Mom Thinks I'm Cool #1

This bills itself as the journal of self -deprecongratulation- a title which it lives up to very well. Chris D. Ziegler explores the dark recesses of his own twisted psyche, the disillusionment of youth, and why people think he looks like weird Al Yankovic. By the time your done reading this you really feel like you know Chris and he doesn't seem like a bad guy to know. Chris captures well the feelings that all youth feel as they approach responsibility and adulthood and leave childhood behind. He talks about his struggles playing with crappy high school punk bands, interviews his sister, and writes about how he misses his home town now that he's in collage. Still being in High school myself and living in a reasonably small town, I can really relate to a lot of what he talks about, and many of the people he talks about remind me a lot of my own friends, and a little bit of myself. I especially liked the retrospective he did of his middle school - high school career (did anybody like middle school?) and the story about how he is addicted to sleep. A sad and funny personal zine and well worth the price of a stamp. (JK)

PO box 481, Tombstone, AZ 85638, USA—FREE!

OJ Killed Elvis #1

It's a punk zine that wants to be different from the average punk zine. It doesn't succeed, but then again, it doesn't fail in being a halfway decent punk zine, considering it's the first issue. There is a story about the editor and his friends stalking a fellow high school student to beat him up because he was a bully, a go-nowhere story about a record convention, some stuff about cool toys editor owns and a cool piece about a creek near his house. Besides that, there's the obligatory reprints, some angry essays and, thank gawd, no reviews. Needs improvement, but isn't flush-able. (SM)

Mike, 123 Shady Hill Rd., Apalachin, NY 13732 \$2 or \$1 and three stamps or \$1 for the poor

Old Goat Zine #2

Kevin is a 40 year old family man who has a lot of interesting perspectives. Problem is, he chooses not to share as much with us as I would have hoped. Instead he opts for fairly boring band interviews and

reviews (the kind where you've never heard of any of the bands and the writing does nothing to make you want to hear them). One interview that had potential was one with the Intense School Of Wrestling. A good idea, but the guy being interviewed had some poor responses to good questions. I applaud Kevin for his work, but I hope to learn much more about his life and opinions in further issues. (JS)

\$1; Kevin, 1117 Purcell Ave., Cincinnati, OH, 45205

Pau '79 #4

I'm starting to feel like a grumpy old man because I can't identify with a lot of the zines being put out nowadays. Pau '79 is nothing but whiny kids arguing over nothing and spewing nonsense about silly, overrated bands. Meaningless columns that seem to echo each other; almost as if each columnist has to really strain to come up with an original thought. One can only read about how the Dance Hall Crashers kick ass live so many times... (JS)

\$1 or free if you live in Hawaii; Jimmy Lee, 3215 Ala Ilima St. #608B, Honolulu, HI, 96818. www.angelfire.com/pa/pau79

Phyte Fanzine #1

Mike's original intent was to produce a zine anchored by issues and causes, but he ends up with a mostly music-intensive publication. Aside from the in-depth interview with Daron of Four Hundred Years regarding Daron's politics, and an article introducing the gasoline alternative called ethanol, most of the included writing is devoid of distinction, and unfortunately, Phyte gets lost in the glut of music zines. Trial is interviewed, and an Ink & Dagger/Botch tour diary suffers from lack of compelling content. Mike's only written contributions are reprints from articles he submitted to other zines, and all are a bit ambiguous, almost missing their desired effect. The zine's computer design is well done, if simplistic. Anal retentive note: Where are the staples? (JVS)

Mike, P.O. Box 14228, Santa Barbara, CA 93107

Pigs will pay #5

This zine has a really cool Star Wars cover of princess Leah, which looks like it was taken from one of the old movie adaptation paperbacks. The zine itself is mostly a collection of short "slice of life" stories, a couple journal entries, and a few interviews with bands (Volition & Human Music). The stories are all really short and a lot of them have a tendency to just kind of end before making any kind of point. Depending how you look at this style of writing you could say it either creates a kind of melancholy feel to the zine or could say it's just kind of annoying. The layout is nice, the actual writing isn't bad, but the lack of an overlaying theme made it difficult for me to really get into. If nothing else, buy it for the cool Star Wars cover. (JK)

Pigs Will Pay-- 1507 19th St. Sacramento, California --(doesn't say how much, I would just send a stamp)

Plague Dog #1 fall 1997

Unlike many people nowadays, I enjoy the zines that are put out by people who do so with their bare hands and not with a Macintosh. When done well; like this zine, it is bursting with personality and emotion and allows the reader to really get into the editor's mind. From her writings, Eve appears to be a very intelligent and caring human and her writings set the

scene which made me feel like I was sitting there, listening to these stories in person. The writings have a political undertone to them done in a very personal manner. She also has a talent for writing fiction and finally closes the book with a neat little comic concerning critical mass. A well done first effort. (BR)

\$1; P.O. Box 15306, Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Radiofree Texas Heartland #2

Decent zine done by this guy named Dave. Dave has a bunch of things to say about a bunch of stuff. No reviews or interviews, (which is nice) just thoughts and ideas ranging from his job at the newspaper sorting the dailies to his love for Superchunk and Sebadoh! Wish there was more to read, I liked this one. (FR)

"Trade or whatever" RFTXH 23 Wrangler Morgan's Point Belton, TX 76513

The Rain That Fell Last Night Made Me Fall In Love With You #12

The zine with the longest name returns after about a year hiatus. Robert Sutter III has a real way with words; poetic, emotional, honest. Intense accounts of the Headwaters Forest rally, Earth First civil disobedience, the problems with heroin in the scene, Critical Mass bike demos, and other pressing issues in his (now temporary) residence of Santa Rosa, CA. The for-

mat of The Rain... is similar to Fucktooth, while the content reminds me a lot of Spectacle. And if that outstanding combination isn't enough, how about this: Rob is one of the most powerful writers I've come across in over 10 years of reading zines. Words that can fuel action. I'm sure he's blushing by now, so I'll stop. (JS)

\$2; Box 15306, Santa Rosa, CA, 95402

Reel #5

Second rate punk zine in the MRR mold. You know, columns, reviews, interviews, etc. Stolen graphics (a Rye Coalition cover photo nicked from Punk Planet, which would have been OK, if Rye had been mentioned even once within) and rehashed debates on all things punk. I really liked Kevin Daft's writings and am utterly convinced that a personal zine by him would be a great read. Interviews ranged from terrible (drunken ramblings by sexist pop-punker frat boys Homegrown) to informative and hilarious (ultra smooth Ron Richards from Muddle Fanzine). Reel needs some work. (JS)

\$1; Kevin, 18 Elmwood Rd., Florham Park, NJ, 07932, MJF474@msn.com

Rinky Dink #1

We have seen this before, an issue that deals with death. I am not so sure that we have seen death in this light. It has some of the famous femme deaths: Mary Provost, Jane Mansfield, etc. I did like an article about your options on burial and how to save

money. Interesting well written, sometimes light, sometimes serious zine. Suggested. (EA)

\$1 or \$3 overseas PO Box 1061 Pacifica, CA 94044

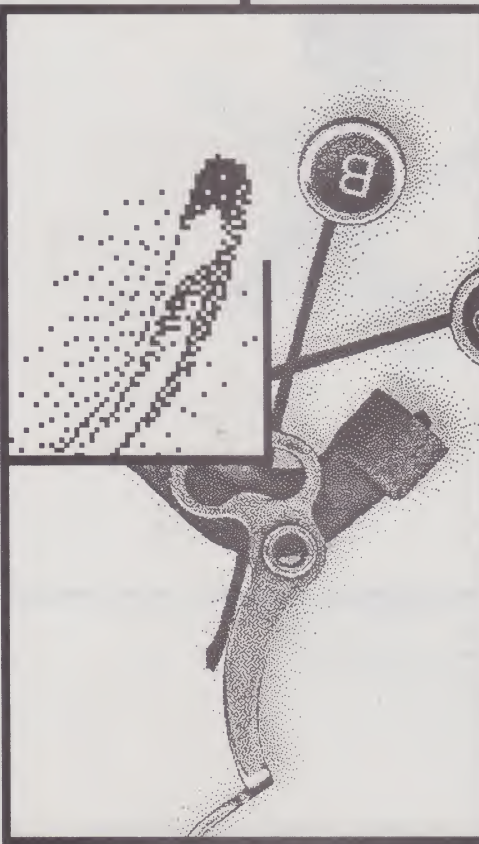
Rockford Sucks #?

Somebody help me out here. You can write a column about how Nikki Sixx is a jerk for calling someone a "nigger" but then proceed to call people "faggots" and "bitches" and that's okay? Screw you and yr. Shitty zine. We don't need block-heads like you killing trees and wasting our ink. Save the drama for yr. Mama and a whole bunch of other mean things. Don't support this piece of shit. (FR)

\$2 Rockford sucks PO Box 7172 Rockford, IL 61126

Salt for Slugs vol. 2 no. 1 / Winter 1997-98

Excellent. Top notch. My only complaint is that there isn't enough. Nice big layout makes Salt for Slugs attractive and easy to read, but limits the



amount. Glossy cover and all, Salt for Slugs is big time now I guess. The cover story about a women who was arrested and jailed (temporarily) for pulling a squirt gun on a bus driver is a hilarious read. The retro interview of Pete Murray from Marginal Man was a lot more interesting then reading about the latest pop-punk band that hasn't proved a darn thing yet. Too much more to list. (EA)

Salt For Slugs PO Box 50338 Austin, TX 78763 www.fringeware.com/salt4slugs

Salza #s 2 & 3

On the cover of one of these zines, it touts "Bad Poetry Inside!" They were right. Lotsa random stuff written by random people, so it isn't all bad, but it isn't too groundbreaking either. Plenty o' teen angst if yr. Into that stuff. (FR)

\$1 Cleopatra 6817 Arbor Lane NE Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

Satire #9

The front cover is written by hand on a blank white page and I am quick to realize that a lot of space will go unused. Most of the content is venting about the poor state of the punk scene in Thunder Bay. In that respect, these are topics I cannot relate to seeing as though I have never heard of Thunder Bay until seeing this zine. The bulk of this zine is scattered ads and short writings that are placed any which way on a plain white background. There are some reviews included and before you even realize, you have finished it all. Nothing here of interest to me. (BR)

free or \$1 out of Thunder Bay; 428 Oliver Rd., Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 2G3 Canada

Scorpion #3

I found this zine to be very well rounded when I finished. At first, it looked pretty dull and surrounded by music that I could care less about. In the first few pages, there is a eye-opening poem that really caught me by surprise, followed by a hilarious (whether or not that was the intent is hard to decipher) story about growing up in Hollywood and going to school with celebrities. There are some informative articles about feminism and culture that I found most enjoyable. There is also informative articles on DJ Culture and interviews with Drum And Bass, Exene Cervanka, Blackout Records, Dischord, BYO, Revelation, Teenbeat and Temperance Records. My only complaint is the way these sections are put together. It follows suit in a predictable pattern instead of mixing everything together. Future issues have extremely good possibilities. (BR)

\$2; P.O. Box 328, Herndon, VA 20172

Second Choice #2

Newsprint straightedge zine. Pretty decent layout and stuff. Hard to take SxExy kids serious when they refer to people that aren't straight edge as "those who have gone to the dark side," but its got some pretty decent interviews with some of those "chugga chugga" bands all the hardcore kids love these days as well as reviews and some fiction. If this is for you, you should probably already own this zine. (FR)

\$2 (U.S.) \$4 (elsewhere) Second Choice PO Box 7067 Hackettstown, NJ 07840-7067

Shat Upon #4

This is a really impressive looking publication from yet another town that I am unfamiliar with. It opens up a listing of Missoula bands that are detailed to the letter. There are no ads for labels or bands but ads for Missoula businesses, which seems kind of interesting. Drinking alcohol appears to be a favorite hobby of the editors which left me kind of high and dry, being straightedge and all. The editors of this zine have a refreshing sense of humor. The argument of Morbid Angel vs. Deicide is funny as is the article on

swashbuckling, which still hasn't given me any confidence. The swashbuckling quiz should be considered mandatory in all 24 hour restaurants. Shat Upon was a refreshing, coffee house style surprise. (BR)

\$2; P.O. Box 9081, Missoula, MT 59802

Sissy #7

Hee hee! This zine had me laffing out loud—a rare occurrence when it comes to printed matter. Here is Sissy's SEX issue and it is so worth yer dollah. My favourite pieces are The Battle of the Sex Organs, A Tale of Two Ad Campaigns, Is This Cybersex?, And God Created Orgasms..., and some very plausible reasoning as to why pinball machines are so damn sexy. Plus other bunches of rad stuff. Great issue! (PK)

\$1; Kelly/Kevin Hoffman, 111 Dallas Ave., Newark DE, 19711

Slave #1

From one glance at the cover, I knew that this would be my pick of the litter. The artwork is eye candy, the content is intelligent and informative and the interviews are deep and impressive. The layout is reminiscent of Second Nature but has a strong political feel with a number of well-written essays on Dioxins, Kwane Cannon, feeling crushed, television and

public education. The interviews are done with the likes of Kilara, Coalesce, Rick Spencer and satanic artist Chris Martin. The most interesting interview is without a doubt with the artist. He gives a real accurate portrayal of what a true satanist lives like and seeing as though the subject matter intrigues me to no end, I fully enjoyed this interview. The Coalesce interview came in a close second. It struck me funny when he mentioned Everlast. Boy, was that ever embarrassing! Regardless, this is the future of what I hope to see from zine culture. (BR)

\$2; P.O. Box 10093, Greensboro, NC 27404

Soap And Spikes #3

Coverage of crusty punk and oi. Interviews with GBH, Peter And The Test Tube Babies, and The Forgotten Rebels. All of this laid out in lovely all caps cheap computer style. One staple in the upper left corner. Booooooring. I swore I'd never write a zine review like this. But here it is... (JS)

\$1; 431 Burlington Ave, Apt. #2, Burlington, ON, L7S 1R3, Canada

Speed Demon #9

Queer Italian zine that appears to be good, hell I don't speak Italian and no one else I could find does as well. Here are the topics though Pansy Division, Lotsa queer bands from Europe, music and zine reviews, Sailor Moon article and 40

pages of other queer ramblings, movies and such. If you can read Italian order this cause it really appears to be an excellent zine. (EA)

\$5, 40 pages PO Box 44/A Pizza S. Babila 4/D 20122 Milano, Italy

Stay Free! #14

Holy Crap! Turn off your TV right now! Actually you would probably be better off if you just threw it out the window. Wow! They should give this magazine out in schools like condoms to protect us from the Media. This issue of Stay Free features interviews with Stewart Ewen, Mark Hosler from Negativland, A psychological animal coloring book and a bunch of really scary articles about the media's manipulation of every aspect of our lives. There is so much stuff in this one issue that I can't believe there were thirteen issues before it. All of the writing is very smart and informative and by the time your done you may never watch TV the same way again. The layout is very professional and well laid out,(as a



good layout should be) and actually reminds me of pplanet's form. The writings tight. The fake ad's are hilarious("Mr. Jenkins h as never considered soiling ones pants to be the end of a perfectly good party") and you actually fell smarter by the time your done reading this. I could go on and on about all of the things that are great about this magazine but I don't think I could do it justice, so just buy it for gods sake! (JK)

Stay Free! PO box 306 Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012

Sty Zine #26

Not a "traditional" issue of Sty Zine, this edition instead serves as a reprint pf Icki's series of stories about his time as a medical "guinea pig," a series which originally ran in the Washington (D.C.) City Paper. Needless to say, this zine is not for the squeamish. The accounts of needles, blood, IVs and other various unsundries were enough to cause this reader distress—a true testament to the detail and truth in the words written within the zine's pages. Icki's writing talents shine through in these many gruesome true-life accounts, and the art by William McCurtain (including a great cover and a number of great woodcuts) accents the story perfectly. Not for the faint of heart, but a compelling read for those who can bear it. (JVS)

\$1; Icki, P.O. Box 12839, Gainesville, FL 32604

Underestimated #5

This issue of Underestimated contains an interesting interview with small press publisher Stuart Ross, a diary of the authors experiences while riding Milwaukee buses to work, a story about eating Fried cheese at the Wisconsin State Fair, and a centerfold of some hairy legged guy with a gun and a pope's hat over his crotch. Nothing real original here but it's still a pretty entertaining read. The bus riding stories are quirky and funny and the interviews are interesting. Except for the hairy legged guy- with- popes hat centerfold I really liked this zine. (JK)

50cents or 2 stamps Denise Scilingo, P.O. box 13243 Chicago, IL 60613

Wake Up or Die #9

I hope ol' Mitch didn't make too many copies of this zine, because just one is too many. It's one of those whiny, sloppy punk zines: It's got an interview with a punk band that begins with the band introducing themselves, it's got a two-page explanation of how the kid's town sucks, it's got reviews, it's got a reprinted cartoon, it's got ads. And, irony of ironies, it's got guidelines to doing a good zine. Oh, and I can't leave out the myriad grammatical errors. At the end, Mitch mentions his next issue ... I urge you, Mitch, please reconsider. (SM)

Mitch, 624 Zoll, Warrensburg, MO 64093 free (stamps?)

War Crime #3

48 pages of newsprint devoted to numerous political groups. The most riveting item is a long, researched story regarding the origins of Sea Shepard, a group committed to preserving the ecosystem in our oceans. Also included are interviews with the Black Autonomy Collective and the Animal Liberation Front. Pieces on Mumia, Canada's Lubicon Territory (threatened with clearcutting), and various protest information is also included, as well as some music reviews and ads. While this seems to be one of the more well-informed political publications that still remains somewhat tied to the "punk" community, the appearance and presentation are rather drab, and discourage much more than short attention

spans. Definitely worthwhile from an information standpoint, but War Crime could have such potential for influencing a new audience with some graphical spunk included. (JVS)

\$2; Mike, P.O. Box 2741, Tucson, AZ 85702

Working for the Man (stories from behind the cubicle wall) #2

This zine should actually be called "Whining About my Job." Zines about work have the potential to be great—workplaces are filled with stupid decisions, stupid incidents and stupid policies that make for great, enlightening stories. Unfortunately, I found none of that captured in here—only self-pity and annoying complaints along the lines of "I hate my co-worker because the boss likes her better than me." The writing in the zine is pretty good, and there are a wide variety of writers. I just wish I got something out of this besides annoyed. (SM)

P.O. Box 460125, San Francisco, CA 94146 Z2

Yikes #1

Let me just begin by saying that this is great. Yikes follows the adventures of Pullapart boy, X-ray spence, Dead boy, Chubby Cheeks, and Lil' Bloody- five mean little tykes who each have aspects of a different B-movie monster(dead boy is a Zombie, Lil' Bloody is a Vampire etc..) The comic is composed of four

short- twisted little tales starring the five boys. In the first story Pullapart boy, Lil' Bloody and X-ray spence break into Chubby Cheeks house to re-claim a baseball bat he borrowed from them and never gave back, and end up breaking all of his stuff. They make up a story about ghosts wrecking his stuff, but it backfires when Chubby Cheeks gets an offer to be on a TV show about Haunted Houses. The stories are all really funny in a strange sick kind of way, yet never become too dark to loose their childlike cuteness. The best thing about this comic is Weissman's artwork, which is printed in attractive three color- black, white and green. I can't really tell who his art style reminds me of, but that's good(It's never good to be able to directly compare one artists work to another's) Go buy this now!! (JK)

\$2.95 Alternative Press, inc. 611 NW 34th Dr., Gainesville, FL 32607-2429

Zine World #4

Absolutely essential to the zine scene, this thick but unintimidating resource guide always gets me pretty excited. Zine World believes "freedom of the press is for everyone" and has made a concerted effort to review as many different kinds of zines as possible in its many pages. Editor Doug has come up with some excellent ideas; such as listing all of the zines alphabetically regardless of the type of zine, and getting the dedicated review volunteers to log the time they spent reading each zine. The usually boring small print about

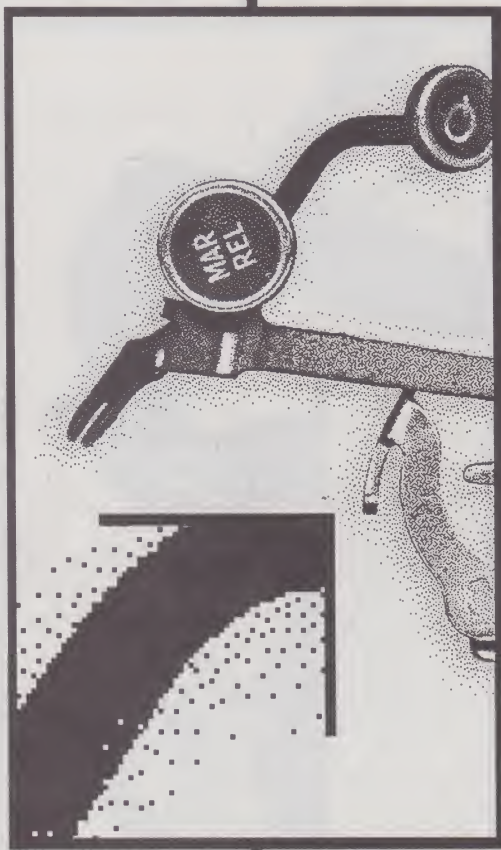
policies and such is written in an enjoyable and humorous style. Also, the letters section is a real hoot with many disgruntled zinesters complaining about Zine World's "harsh" critics. One thing's for sure, they tell it like it is. (JS)

\$3.50; 924 Valencia St. #203, San Francisco, CA, 94110

Zine World #5

I reviewed this last time and couldn't say enough good things about it. A wonderful resource for zine reviews that is hardly a dull read because of the blunt honesty of most of the review staff. Shit is shit, especially in the zine world. My only complaint: If I start reading this regularly I'm sure it will be only a matter of time before I get bored of the format. Not much here really to offer besides zine listings/reviews/news. How about a few feature articles on the zine world? Or maybe expand on the news, letters and blacklist sections and cut back a bit on page after page of critiques. (JS)

\$3.50; 924 Valencia St. #203, San Francisco, CA, 94110



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"This sucks" - Rockford Sucks #1



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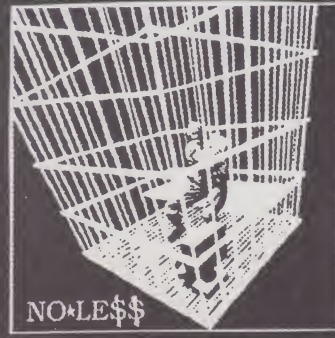
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All issues before PP15 are all black & white. Covers of PP15-21 are 2-3 color. All issues after 21 have full color covers. Confused yet?

PP4 I don't know where we got copies of this, but when we moved the office, we found a stack of 'em lying around. Interviews with Epitaph records, Allied records, and a punk living with AIDS. Article on problems at the ABC No RIO. Ugly as hell. This is as old school as you can get 80 pgs.

PP5 interviews with Bikini Kill, Huggy Bear, and the Queers. An article on the MCS. Plus everything else you expect and some stuff you don't! 80 pgs.

PP7 the one year anniversary issue. Interviews with Man or Astraman, Kerosene 454, & Rudy Vanderlans. An article on the NEA & an article on Pirate Video. Columns, reviews, & more more more!! 96 pgs

PP8 interviews with Red Aunts, Aus Rotten, Fabric, and The Smears. The controversial article on Punk Publishing. Plus comics, columns, DIY, and much much much more. 104 pgs.

PP10 Interviews with Weston, Chisel, and Braid. An article on Spoken Word and another on Bob Dole. DIY files on how to buy a guitar. Plus fiction, columns, reviews, and everything else you love! Also, it looks really really good. 112 pgs

PP11 Interviews with Texas is the Reason, Naked Aggression, John Cougar Concentration Camp, and Christie Front Drive. Article on Community based money. Part 2 of the how to buy a guitar DIY file. Plus fiction, columns, and everything else you love love love! 104 pgs

PP12 Interviews with Cub, Squirtgun, and Aaron Cometbus. Articles on UFOs, Punk Film, and The Telecommunications Act. DIY on how to get ready for a tour. Plus fiction, columns, and everything else you love love love! 104 pgs

PP13 Interviews with Adrian Tomine, Lifetime, Jon Moritsugu, and Sinkhole. An incredible article about voting in the US. DIY on how to change car oil. Plus fiction, columns, and everything else you want like you want me! 112 pgs

PP14 Interviews with Re/Search's V. Vale, Delta 72, Promise Ring, The Strike, and Fadsheet 5's R. Seth Friedman. Fascinating article about punk & multinational capitalism. DIY on buying a van. Recipes reviews, columns and all that other stuff you love! 120 pgs

PP15 This issue features 20 pages of coverage from the 1996 Democratic & Republican conventions. It also has interviews with Sarah Dyer from Action Girl Comics, Rhythm Collision, Chamberlain, and cheesecake as well as DIY, columns, and all that other stuff you can't get enough of! 120 pgs

PP16 Interviews with Sarah Jacobson, Damnation AD, The Dismemberment Plan, and Pat West of Change Zine. A fantastic article on Culture Jamming, as well as an article about the 1996-97 NBA season (yowza is right). The DIY files is a massive article about distributing your zine. Plus, the PP staff picks the best releases of 1996. Guess what? There's all the other stuff you like about PP in here! 120 pgs

PP17 This issue features "All Punk Cons" the best critique of modern punk ever put to paper; before you go screaming about 'sellouts', make sure you've read the article. Interviews with The Descendents, Dan.O'Mahoney, Snapcase, Rye Coalition, and Pain. An article on living with the possibility of breast cancer. DIY on scanning, and of course much much much more. 136 pgs.

PP19 PP19 explores the link between punk rock and heroin with 4 articles dedicated to discussing the drug's appeal to the punk community and the repercussions of that appeal. This ain't no simple "just say no" critique either: we know why you do H. But we also know why you need to stop. In addition to all that fun, there's interviews with The Softies, Troubleman Unlimited, Dillinger 4, Lookout Records and more. Articles on the battle between Alternative Tentacles and the Philadelphia PD, The Who's Emma Collective, and more. There is so much in this issue we can't even list it all. 168 pgs.

PP20 Everything you've ever wanted to know about Black Flag but were afraid to ask. Almost all the members of BF finally speak about being in the band, being out of the band, and all points in between. In addition, we've got interviews with Citizen Fish, Elliot Smith, Sweetbelly Freakdown, Jejune, Mordam Records, & Lumberjack Distribution. Articles on the McLibel trial, the Southern Baptists' boycott of Disney, and the rebirth of the American labor movement at Action '97 in Detroit. You know there's more in here. You know you want it. You know we love you Ice. 160 pgs.

PP21 The Make-Up grace the beautiful purple cover of this, our last spot-color cover. The color gamut may be limited, but the scope of stuff covered in this issue sure ain't. In addition to the gospel according to The Make-Up, there are interviews with Los Crudos, Tsunami, Karate, Gameface, Joan of Arc & Slowtime Records. There's also an incredible article called "Youth Quake" that exposes America's undeclared war on kids. That's not the only article though, there's a bio of author Nicole Panter, an article about the unionization efforts of strippers at the Lusty Lady strip club, and one man's story about escaping from jail. Plus a ton of other stuff—it's our longest issue ever!!! 176 pgs.

PP22 Our first issue with a full-color cover! Writer Annalee Newitz went to Washington DC to cover the creepy Christian men's movement, The Promise Keepers, at their national rally. But this isn't simple reporting—Annalee donned baseball cap, long sleeves, lowered her voice, bound her breasts and took part as a man. Plus interviews with Ray & Porcell of Shelter/Youth of Today, Punk legend Exene Cervenka, Gern Blandsten Record's Charles Maggio, Ovarian Trolley, & Burning Airlines, as well as author Stewart Home. Pansy Division graces PP's pages with an exclusive diary of their current US tour. And as if all that wasn't enough, PP gets into the ring with Incredibly Strange Wrestling, the most exciting thing to happen to punk rock since the guitar. Plus we've crammed everything else you expect in an issue and more! 168 pgs.

PP23 This issue features an uncompromising interview with Chumbawamba. Have they been able to successfully subvert the mainstream for their own political agenda or have they—like so many bands before them—succumbed to capital's lies? Chumbawamba's answers are sure to surprise, infuriate and illuminate. Also inside are interviews with Gearhead Fanzine's Mike Lavella, Lovevit Records, Subterranean Distribution, The Van Pelt, and The Young Pioneers. Articles on the Pirate Radio movement—kids are sick of the media-monopoly top 40 and they're starting their own radio stations to bring their voice into the mix; Open Hand chronicles one person's experiences going from being a singer in a punk band to being an outreach worker for homeless youth; Taking it to the Streets brings you to the frontlines of guilla postering; and Victories and Defeats talks about the recent controversies surrounding the Teamsters. Plus there's everything else you like! 154 pgs

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some issues may sell out. list alternates when ordering.

When ordering from out of the US or Canada, please add \$2 to each issue ordered.



DO YOU LIKE TO DRAW?

In celebration of 7 years and 100 (!!!!) releases, and in observance of the *Punk Planet* "Art & Design" issue, and in anticipation of the coming millenium, Kill Rock Stars (the record label from Olympia Washington) warmly invites you to enter our

KILL ROCK STARS LOGO DESIGN CONTEST!!!

- WIN FABULOUS AND VALUABLE PRIZES!!!
- GET YOUR NAME AND ARTWORK PRINTED IN ADVERTISEMENTS AND A PRESS RELEASE!!
- SEE YOUR WORK GRACE THE COVERS OF SOME OF THE BEST RECORDS OF THE NEXT DECADE (AND PROBABLY SOME NICE POSTERS AND STICKERS TOO)!
- FURTHER DEVELOP A VALUABLE MODERN SKILL!!
- BOLSTER YOUR SENSE OF SELF WORTH!!
- AND HAVE FUN DOING IT!!

Your Mission:

Design a cool new logo for Kill Rock Stars to put on our records and CDs and posters and T shirts stickers and chotchkes and such and whatnot.

Your Guidelines:

It should look good in one color, but a multi color variation is also permissible. It should look equally good when reproduced big like on the front of an XL T-shirt or when printed very small like in the lower left hand corner of the back of a CD or a square-inch sticker.

Please submit two designs: 1) the logo by itself; and 2) the logo with the Kill Rock Stars address (shown below in this ad) included below, above, nearby, or incorporated into it (see examples of existing logos).

The Prizes:

GRAND PRIZE DESIGN: \$300 gift certificate from Kill Rock Stars mailorder PLUS a one year's subscription to the Mailorder Freak 7" singles club, and 2 copies of every future KRS product that the logo design appears on.

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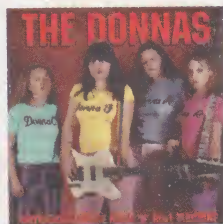
THE FINE PRINT: Entries will be judged by a panel of 2 KRS employees, 4 band members and 2 graphic artists. Winners will be selected by July 15th, and announced in the September/October issue of this magazine. non-winning entries will be returned to entrant by November 1st, 1998 if entry is accompanied with a stamped, self addressed envelope. Winning entry designs become the exclusive and unlimited property of Kill Rock Stars. non-winning entries will be returned to entrant by November 1st, 1998 if entry is accompanied with a stamped, self addressed envelope. The existing Kill Rock Stars logos are registered trademarks.

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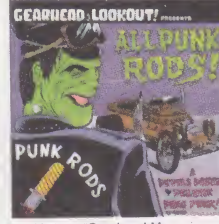
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